

We Must Have Good Pitch, 'Cause Baby, You and Me are So In Tune!

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We Must Have Good Pitch, 'Cause Baby, You and Me are So In Tune!

by [Quid_Pro_Cure](#)

Summary

The Feral Boys band is looking for a new Lead Guitarist and Rhythm guitarist after a string of bad luck and their high standards. With Sunset Band Fever, a local competition, barely 3 weeks away, can they find the missing links to complete their band?

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The Feral Boys Band AU everyone asked for, ft Karlnapity, bc I'm a sucker for them, and DNF, because feral boys dynamics.

Borrowing songs from The Wrecks for their discography, you should really give these guys a listen, they're super awesome. Each chapter title is a different song from their discography.

NOTE: This story is an AU with the smp CHARACTERS, not the actual CCs, hence why the character designs are their MC skins. I do NOT ship real people, only characters, thank you. If any content creator expresses discomfort about shipping at any point in the future, this fic WILL BE DELETED. Respect the CCs y'all <3

Notes

IT'S HERE!

Welcome back everybody, good to be here, I hope you're ready because I am!
So grab your guitars and blast the bass, because the Feral Boys Band AU (Quid Pro Cure Style!) has arrived!

Thank you all for the support on Out of the Woods, if you're new here, go check out my college AU fic, it's p cool...

Also feel free to follow me on [twitter](#) for updates and more, as well as exclusive content like actual clothing designs for their fits!

I interact with everyone, and follow back any active accounts, so lets be moots! The community is great, and I'd love to see it grow!

I hope y'all enjoy!

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BETA'd twice, I think

Freaking Out

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“I’m holding another round of auditions.”

George groans from across the room, but Sapnap can’t bring himself to care. “You just scared off our literal *lead guitarist*, George. We could make do without a rhythm guitar, but lead?! No chance.” He continues, swiping a stray piece of hair from his face.

Today’s practice had been all kinds of hectic, and even Sapnap’s headband hadn’t been able to keep some stray locks from falling forward into his eyes. He’s barely had the time to slow down and readjust the small strip of elastic, but seeing as their lead guitarist has just walked out, there’s evidently no time like the present.

“I’m hosting auditions, and we’re looking for a lead AND a rhythm guitarist.” Sapnap replies, letting his hair fall loose as he removes his headband. He shakes his head, ruffling his hair as he lets his statement sit amongst the two most responsible for the abrupt departure of their previous bandmate.

“Well it wasn’t just me.” George mutters from behind his drum set where he’s leaned carefully over the snare drum. Sapnap rolls his eyes behind his fringe as he swipes his hair back into a short ponytail.

“Oh come on.” Comes the reply from the party George had been referring to. Dream speaks indignantly from where he’s adjusting the microphone stand to be put away, and Sapnap resists the urge to slap the absolute shit out of his childhood friend as he yanks his headband back on.

“Both of you need to shut up, because, I’ll be honest, you’re both equally as guilty.” He finally says, facing the two, one hand on the neck of his guitar and the other lifted to point “You” he says, swinging his finger at George. “just couldn’t help but to spring an impromptu guitar solo on him with no forewarning, not to mention the countless insults to his ability to read your music.”

George shrugs. “He should’ve been better at improv. And it’s not my fault he was inept at the most basic aspect of being in a band.” Sapnap scoffs.

“And you,” He says, focusing his accusatory finger on Dream “ganged up on the poor guy with George, and blamed him for your inability to keep up during the bridge.”

Dream just takes a swig from his water bottle. “He’s the one who threw it all off, I was doing the right tempo, and he was off. So I told him so.”

“Guess what?” Sapnap says, tone dripping with sarcasm. Dream and George raise twin eyebrows at him. “I don’t care! What I do care about is that we’re out of a lead guitarist and rhythm guitarist with *one month* before Sunset. So whether you like it or not, I’m holding auditions so we can actually *function*.”

Thankfully, neither try to dispute him this time, but they still avoid his gaze as they pack up their instruments.

“I’m making flyers and putting them out around town *tomorrow*, and advertising on our social medias starts *today*. I’ll bother Bad for some good marketing, and we’re holding the auditions next

Thursday from 3-8 PM. They'll be open, people will just come in when they come, play a song with us, and we'll see who clicks. Clear your schedules. Unless you're going to the hospital or something, you're both going to be there." He threatens, laying down the plan. "George, I'm going to provide 'Freaking Out' as the song they'll be performing with us."

Dream scoffs. "No, you won't. Have them do a cover of someone else's song with us. We don't need them stealing our discography." he says, and Sapnap raises his eyebrows and cocks his head as he acknowledges Dream's clever thinking.

"Ok, fine, that's a good idea. We'll do 1985? The Bowling for Soup version? That's a classic, and Dream, I know you and I know every line." He says with a wink.

George considers, but Dream is clearly on board. "Works for me. George, you still know that drumline?"

"Of course I do, you request we do a cover of it at nearly every event. I'd be more surprised if I forgot it." The older says, and Dream scoffs fondly. Gross.

"Alright, sounds good." He finally says, and Sapnap nods approvingly from where he'd been noting down the specifics on his phone.

While he had been spitballing most of the information he had been throwing at the boys, writing them down made them official, or, at least, as official as they could be on such short notice.

"Ok. I'm putting this on the band calendar AND in the groupchat. George, if you sleep through these auditions, you will have no room to bitch if the member isn't to your liking." The younger reprimands, entering in a date on his phone, and sending the message with the simplified details to their group chat.

"And Dream, give everyone a chance. I swear to God, if you stop singing halfway through because they're not 'keeping up' or they're 'out of tune' I will take the mic myself." Sapnap threatens "You and I both know you could easily keep up with whatever curveball they throw at you, but you don't."

Dream doesn't speak, because Sapnap's right, and the younger hopes his friend will comply. "Alright. And guys, unless everyone at this audition is absolutely 100% trash, we're going to take who we can get, and we are *going* to stick with them until Sunset at least. Understood?"

He gets grumbled yes's as replies, but it's enough. "I audio recorded that so you can't have deniability." He says indignantly, pressing the finish recording button on his phone. He levels his bandmates with a stare "That's how serious I am."

The message reads across loud and clear.

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By the end of the day, Bad has pulled through and provided some professional-level marketing for the group, and Sapnap tells his friend he'll owe him.

Bad replies, refusing the favor, but Sapnap doesn't really care. Bad has already done so much for him.

While Bad is several years older than him, Sapnap had made his acquaintance at a local band function, back when he was simply a soloist.

From then on, Bad had been their “on the road” supervision, and the only reason Sapnap had been able to get to and do any gigs as a high-schooler. His real parents trusted Bad enough to keep him safe, and their bond had formed into a strange father-son relationship in and around the band scene.

He was also an extremely talented artist, who agreed to do marketing for The Feral Boys, something the artistically-lacking group of them appreciated greatly.

Their online following isn’t too large, but it certainly isn’t small, and the interest has already been piqued. Between people wondering what happened to Eret, their previous lead guitarist, and others interested in the chance to join a band with some backing already, Sapnap had already received several DMs, PMs, and messages about interest.

By the next day, Sapnap has flyers printed out and ready for pickup at Walgreens, and, as expected, he’s the only one placing them up around the town. Damn his friends, he’ll yell at them later.

He doesn’t mind though, because already, by the time he’s home, his phone is pinging with even more interest, and everything is coming together.

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Thursday loops around quite quickly, and the lowered time between this day and Sunset makes Sapnap’s nerves twitch. He really hopes they’ll find who they need at these auditions, because if they don’t, their chances at Sunset are slim.

Dream has shown up, and George, Sapnap hopes, will be fashionably late.

He checks his phone frantically as Dream and him set up, and finally, *finally* George rolls in, sliding his backpack off, grabbing his drumsticks, and checking his drum set.

“Look who decided to show up.” Sapnap comments loosely, beginning to tune his strings. George shoots him a venomous look.

“Oh come on, at least he’s here.” Dream cuts in, and George’s look shifts to Dream. Sapnap just smirks.

“True enough. Get back to your vocal warmups, idiot, I’ll join in a second once I hook into the amp.” Dream rolls his eyes with a light smile, but does as Sapnap asks, and by the time he’s on the next octave, Sapnap’s playing along on the bass and chiming in with the harmony as they climb up and down the scale.

He does a similar practice with the electric guitar he’s pulled out of storage, seeing as he’ll need to play lead for the rhythm guitar applicants.

They finish warmup, and Sapnap opens the doors to the auditorium they’ve rented for the auditions, eager to see the musicians who have shown up.

“Alright everyone. We’ll go in order of who showed up, and don’t worry, everyone will get a chance.” He guarantees, and the first attendee is welcomed onto the stage, the rest given a number.

Sapnap takes their names and says he’ll message them when they’re on deck and in the hole, and to feel free to warm up in the adjacent community room.

And then, they jump into the first performance.

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After the first 8 run-throughs of 1985, Sapnap is already tired. They've relegated the auditions to be around 1 minute of the song, and have also told auditioners the minute they'll be playing is random.

This was done to avoid getting too bored of playing the same section of song over and over, but even with the rotation, they've had no decent players.

There's been more lead guitarist auditioners than rhythm guitar, but it's barely 4. They've got several hours left. At the very least, the line of applicants has lessened, and the flow has slowed down to allow longer breaks between performances.

At 4:15, around 5 minutes into a break discussing the previous auditioner, the next person walks in.

Sapnap checks his phone. "Number 9?" He looks to be in his late teens/early 20s, and hosts a mess of brown hair, and a guitar case hanging across his body. The guy smiles as he walks up, and his attire is a comfortable whirl of colors. He's got a color-block sweater hanging laxly on his upper body, torn and stressed at some of the seams for effect, and with a desaturated teal rectangular swirl in the middle. There're crudely hand stitched stars around the decal, a clear addition by the owner, and half of the sweater is purposefully spilt over the belt around his waist.

And while normally, Sapnap doesn't note jeans as a particular fashion choice, it's hard to miss the splash of colors crawling up the guitarist's left leg and splaying from the upper right. It's handpainted down to the cuffs, and Sapnap loves the style.

"Woah, nice jeans, dude." Sapnap compliments, and the man's face lights up brightly. All Sapnap can do is stare, somewhat blinded by the sheer kindness in that smile as he lifts a hand to swipe back his hair. It falls almost hopelessly back into place, but Sapnap catches the flash of color the taller's got on his nails that match the hoodie.

"Thanks! Your eyeliner's really well-done, I always struggle with that." He says, pulling his guitar from behind his back and adjusting the color of the creme button-up under his sweater. "I'm Karl Jacobs by the way, here to apply to be your new rhythm guitarist."

"Oh sweet, we've barely seen any rhythm guitarists all afternoon." Sapnap comments. Dream and George's silence from behind him isn't new, and he hardly expects either to speak until necessary. "I'm Sapnap, on lead vocals is Dream, and our drums guy is George." Karl nods.

"I also play keyboard." He says with a grin, and Sapnap shifts his attention to Dream and George as he motions at the brunette.

"He also plays keyboard!" The shorter reiterates. All George does is raise an eyebrow.

"Let's see if he can play guitar first." Dream comments loosely, and Sapnap turns back to Karl with a cringe. "Sap, switch to lead."

"Got it." He says with a salute, sets down his bass, and fixes his gaze to Karl. "Sorry about them. I'm sure you'll do great. Need any help setting up?" Karl shakes his head, and Sapnap catches a glimpse of a black choker around his neck, and wonders how he didn't notice that at first. It's painfully attractive.

"Nah, you're good." He replies, and Sapnap tries not to get distracted as the man adjusts his guitar, strumming some chords to check the sound. "What section am I playing?"

“We’ll just have you start after the first chorus.” George calls from behind the drums. Karl nods.

““She’s seen all the classics?”” He checks, and Sapnap nods.

“You got it! George, count us in!” He calls as Karl does a brief riff.

George nods, “We’ll give a 4 measure lead in.” So Sapnap picks up his guitar, doing a check to make sure the chords are as in tune as his precious bass, and gets ready to spring into the song.

“1, 2, 3, 4-” Sapnap jumps into the song, vocalizing the beginning ‘Oo-oo-oo’s with Dream, George jumping in barely a beat later, and setting the rhythm.

Karl pops in as well, keeping up the rhythm, hands strumming in perfect time with George as the song continues.

It sounds *good*. Karl isn’t taking more sound than he needs, letting Sapnap on lead shine but keeping the subtle rhythm necessary. The song is pretty rhythm based, but Sapnap, as a lead, is a sucker for improv, adding in several riffs where the original doesn’t.

They reach a sector of the song where the rhythm guitar takes the lead, and it’s clear Karl knows what he’s doing.

*She’s seen all the classics,
She knows every line
Breakfast Club, Pretty in Pink,
Even Saint Elmo’s Fire.*

His fingers strum the chords perfectly as Sapnap overlaps every first beat with a brief strum on lead, and it sounds *good*. Great, even.

Karl takes the lead as they head into *Where’s the miniskirt*,, strumming the repetitive chords wonderfully, and Sapnap improves a brief overlay for spice, as is his style. Karl doesn’t flinch, nor get off beat, but shoots Sapnap a grin.

It’s going well, and then George changes the tempo, increasing the rhythm for the drums as they reach the height of the lyrics

*Whatever happened to
Sitcoms, game shows?*

And *on the radio* is sung much quicker than the original by an adaptable Dream, Sapnap as well adjusting his speed to keep up, sending a harsh glare at George, and sparing a worried look for Karl.

But he’s keeping up, lips pursed in concentration as he adjusts the chords to match beat as they lead into the chorus, tempo returning as George revisits the main beat.

Sapnap aids Dream in backing vocals through the last chorus, whaling on the guitar with Karl keeping pace as well as any of them as they cut off with a flourish, omitting the last set of ‘Oo-oo-oo’s in favor of finishing.

“GEORGE!” Sapnap calls, mouth twisted in a frown as he braces his guitar and whirls around to face his band member. “What the hell? Why did you change the tempo in the middle there?”

“Almost threw me for a loop, but I didn’t become a rhythm guitarist for nothing.” Karl chimes in

with a smile from over his shoulder.

“Dream kept up just fine.” George comments, ignoring Karl.

“Because *Dream* has worked with you before and knows you.” Sapnap replies. “And besides, Karl kept up too. You know it.” The younger says, moving back to pat Karl on the back. “You did amazing, best we’ve heard all day.” He promises with a wink, and Karl grins.

He doesn’t see George shrug, but his silence is telling. He turns back around.

“Come on guys. Karl did an amazing job and you both know it. Fix your attitudes.” Sapnap says, mouth back into a twisted frown. George doesn’t meet his eye, which means Sapnap’s right. He focuses his attention on Dream. “Dream, come *on*.” Dream fiddles with the cord of the microphone, but eventually.

“Yeah, he was pretty good.” The taller says with a shrug. “He did keep time, and played very strongly.”

“Thank you!” Sapnap exclaims, and turns back to Karl. “Alright, you’re free to go, sorry for that tempo change, we’ll let you know by tomorrow, but you’re looking like a pretty good prospect.” He assures.

Karl smiles as he unplugs his guitar, packing up his stuff.

“And hey, even if we don’t go with you, you should call me.” Sapnap adds with a wink. Like hell he was gonna miss out on all Karl had to offer because George was being a little bitch. Karl giggles.

“Oh yeah?” Sapnap grins.

“Yeah. You’ve got my number, I think we’d get along.” The brunette just raises a sweater clad hand to cover his mouth as he giggles again.

“Alright Sapnap. See ya around.” He says as he finally departs.

Sapnap watches him leave, grin still on his face before he turns around to George and Dream.

“He was really good.” He says.

“Don’t let your attraction to him blind you from the facts.” George says, and Sapnap groans.

“I’m not! Objectively, he’s very handsome. And also objectively, he’s very good at playing!” He replies.

“For once, I agree with Sapnap. He was pretty damn good.” Dream chimes in, taking a swig of water. George huffs a sigh, but Sapnap watches him relax.

George has never really been much for socializing, much preferring staying in his room or with the limited company of people he trusts. It’s why he plays the drums, he’s said, easy to stay in the background and let the focus be on the leads and guitarists.

So while George’s attitude with the people trying out isn’t necessarily new or abnormal, Sapnap hopes with whoever the new members are, George can learn to relax around them.

Because Sapnap would not have stayed friends with George if he were always such a prude.

“He handled your stupid test of acceleration.” Sapnap adds on.

“And you didn’t test anyone else like that. I know that means you like him.” Dream comments. George avoids their gaze. Sapnap and Dream’s eyes meet in silent victory.

“I’m gonna shoot a text to the next apply-ee.” Sapnap says, walking towards the auditorium to check his list. “At the very least, we know Karl’s an option, and that’s what we need.”

Now, if only they could find one for lead guitar.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you guys enjoyed chapter 1!

As per the usual, next chapter update next Sunday!

Don't forget to check out my [twitter](#), leave your kudos and comments, bc ofc, I reply to them all <3

Thanks for reading, see you next Sunday,
Cure

Feels So Nice

Chapter Summary

It's been a long day... and still no lead guitarist worth their salt. Unless?

Chapter Notes

Welcome back!

Thank you all for the amazing support on chapter 1, here is the heavily (I would hope) awaited chapter 2!

My bias for Quackity miiight show, but can you blame me?

Anywho, follow me on [twitter](#) for updates, interactions, and more!

Enjoy!

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BETA'd at least 2, maybe 3 times? Who knows.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Sapnap is tired.

There is only so much more he can take of hearing bad renditions of 1985, and 5 hours is longer than he expected. Necessary, but long.

They had taken a dinner break from 6:30 to 7, and thus far, they'd seen a total of 23 applicants spread out amongst the time they'd been here. Out of those 23, Sapnap would tell you about half were lead guitarists who thought they were worth something. The other half of applicants was made up from young kids looking for a start in a band (i.e. not nearly experienced enough), decent players (though nothing remarkable), and Karl.

Karl had been one of three people George had dared to spring a tempo switch on, and was the only one able to keep up. Which meant that the rhythm guitar space was essentially filled, and Sapnap couldn't be more happy.

A lead guitarist, on the other hand: evidently harder to find than anticipated.

"It's 8 o'clock." George says, and it's clear he's tired too.

"It's 7:53." Sapnap says.

"That rounds up. It's 8 o'clock, I'm packing." Sapnap groans as George reaches down to grab his bag.

“We can’t leave! People might still show up, and we still need a lead guitarist! We have had *no one* worth playing with us for lead, there was one guy who was half decent, and he gave me creep vibes.” He says, and Dream sighs.

“Yeah, but what’s the point? The chances of someone walking in in the next-” He checks his phone “5 minutes, who’s worth their salt at playing lead guitar are slim to none.”

He’s right, technically speaking, but Sapnap has always been a stubborn optimist.

“It’s 5 minutes just give it a ch-”

“PLEASE tell me I’m not too late.” The auditorium doors open with a harsh shove, and a silhouette hovers in the doorway. As he walks in, Sapnap catches flashes of bright yellow and deep blue.

As he becomes fully visible, Sapnap finds himself taking in a man an inch or so shorter than him, black hair tucked under a navy beanie and pulled back into the smallest puff of pony-tail Sapnap’s ever seen. He’s wearing a black turtleneck underneath a well-loved blue adidas jacket, and hosts a small, blocky smiley face tattoo on the left of his neck below his ear. Black bracelets adorn his wrists, and Sapnap notices his pants have star and planet decals tucked into the left corner near the pocket, obstructed every so often by the suspender straps that hang loosely around his waist.

“My name’s Quackity, I’m a lead guitarist, but I write some shit- uh, stuff? too. I play a couple different things, but I’m the best at electric.” He introduces, and Sapnap nods. “Is there time for me to play?”

“You’d be best to start setting up. You’ve got 3 minutes, and the song excerpt takes 1 of those.” George calls from behind, pulling his drumsticks back out.

“Awesome, cool, got it. Amp?” Sapnap points him in the direction of the amp, and Quackity moves fast, plugging his guitar in with practiced ease and tuning quickly by ear. ““Kay, where’re we starting from?”

“We’ll just go from the beginning.” George decides, and Dream pulls himself up to the mic, Sapnap adjusting his guitar around his neck and plucking loosely at the bass.

“And how do you guys feel about improv? Cause, I’ll be honest, I like to free-wheel a bit, but I know some bands are sticklers for the music.” Quackity asks, plucking some chords.

Sapnap watches George’s brow raise, intrigued but wary, and answers for the older. “We’ve got no problem with it, that’s how I play when I do lead. Have fun with it, dude.”

Quackity grins as he strums a final tune. “Well, let’s get started yeah? We’re running out of time.”

George hums, reserved and closed off, but begins the count to the start.

“1, 2, 3, 4,”

Oo-oo-ooo!

Dream launches into the vocalizations as Sapnap backs him, and Quackity tears into the opening with vigor.

Charisma seems to overflow as he performs, Sapnap’s eyes drawn to his energy as he hammers on the riffs.

*Debbie just hit the wall
She never had it all
One Prozac a day
Husband's a CPA*

As the song transitions, Quackity takes liberties, melding the chords to his style, and whirling around the stage. It brings Sapnap's energy up too, and he knows it's doing the same to Dream as he watches his friend bring out his own charm, strutting across the stage as though he were performing in front of an audience.

The energy is high, and Sapnap too finds himself putting some umph into his performance. He spares a glimpse to George to find a satisfied smirk on the drummer's face.

And as they come on the 1 minute mark, George shows no sign of stopping, increasing the tempo ever so slightly.

"Keep going!" He yells over the sound, and they do.

Quackity skipping no beats, taking the focus on lead to add in a mini solo, and as they transition back to vocals, he even sidles up next to Sapnap to aid in backing vocals. As he's practically cheek to cheek with Quackity, he can't help but grin as they share the mic, and it's clear the shorter has a vocal history too as he naturally harmonizes with both Sapnap and Dream to fill the sound.

*She rocked out to Wham!
Not a big Limp Bizkit fan
Thought she'd get a hand
On a member of Duran Duran*

And it sounds so freaking good, Sapnap knows they've found their lead guitarist.

The song comes to a close, Quackity taking the empty space to add in an entirely improved lead out that George keeps up with, settling into light accompaniment with his cymbals and snare.

"LET'S GOOO!" Sapnap yells after, holding his guitar out of the way as he and Quackity embrace. "Where the *hell* have you been, dude, that was *awesome*!"

Quackity grins, swiping his bangs back under his beanie. "You guys were awesome too, what the hell? Drummer boy, you kept right up with my ending, thanks man! And my man on vocals! You killed it!"

Dream grins around his water bottle, and Sapnap even catches a flash of a smile on George's face.

"And Bass man, you-" Quackity claps his shoulders "Should call me." He says with a wink, and Sapnap laughs, flushed ever so slightly. "But you were also shredding it out there, epic job with the backing vocals, thanks for letting me share your mic."

"Yeah, of course. You got a history in singing too, then?" Quackity shrugs.

"Used to be a solo act for a while, but I've always wanted to be part of a group. Haven't found one that clicks." He grins again, sharp and wolfish. "Until now. Man, I'm gonna *die* if you guys found a better lead already."

Sapnap shakes his head. "No chance."

"You're the best we've had all day." Dream pipes in.

“You weren’t terrible.” George says, and Sapnap rolls his eyes.

“George, come on. He was great. I think we’ve got our new lead guitarist.” Dream says, smiling at Quackity, and Sapnap lives for the vivacity in his eyes. If Dream was in favor of something, George almost always went along with him, and vice versa.

“Yeah, sure.” George finally relents, and Sapnap whoops, wrapping an arm around Quackity’s shoulder.

“Welcome to the band, dude!” Sapnap says, and Quackity laughs.

“Not that I’m not hyped but before I commit to the band... can I get your names?” Even George lets out a huffed laugh as the trio realize they had failed to introduce themselves to Quackity.

“I’m Sapnap, vocals is Dream, and drummer is George. Sorry about that.” He replies as the giggles die down, and Quackity smiles.

“Nice to meet you all, and I can’t wait to work with you! Did you find a rhythm guitarist too?” He asks, and Sapnap watches him set his guitar to the side and pull out his water bottle.

“Yeah, I think we’ve got someone.” Dream comments, and Sapnap is so glad to see someone else speaking besides himself. “His name’s Karl Jacobs, if I remember, we’ll try to get you guys together for a practice and make sure the synergy is the same with him added into the mix.”

Sapnap nods. “Yeah, we should try to host a practice ASAP. We’ve got 3 weeks before Sunset, and two new people to teach an original song to.”

“Actually, it’d be best to have at least 40 minutes worth of songs. On the off chance we win, they give us a 40 minute time-slot to perform any songs we want the next evening of the festival.” George chimes in. Sapnap cringes.

“Oh yeah, forgot about that. We can do covers, right?” He asks, and George nods.

“Well then, I say we definitely do 1985, seeing as we all know that one. But... we can worry about more specifics later.” The younger says, not wanting to get too far into planning ahead.

“Yeah. Today’s Thursday, I say we try to get Karl and you out to our normal practice studio on Saturday? That gives Sapnap and I some time to rest our vocal chords and everyone some time to refresh.” Dream muses, and Sapnap nods.

“Yeah, I’ll see if he’s free. I’m making a GC with everyone in it, can I grab your number?” Quackity nods, rattling off the digits of his number as Sapnap makes the group. “Alright dude, well you’re free to go, thanks for coming, your energy is off the charts.” He says, smacking a high-five with the shorter.

Quackity grins. “For sure, man, you guys are pretty awesome yourselves, I’ll see you Saturday.”

“See you Saturday!” The three left chorus as Quackity leaves.

“Holy shit, he’s awesome!” Sapnap exclaims, turning to face an equally excited Dream.

“His charisma is crazy, and his skills too.” Dream agrees.

“Thank God we found him, because we needed someone like that.” Sapnap says, relieved, and Dream just nods.

“Let’s hope there’s not a catch.” George says, ever the pessimist. Sapnap rolls his eyes.

“I’m sure it’ll be fine, you worry too much, just enjoy it! We’ve got a full band again!” He says

“Maybe. If Karl can’t keep up with Quackity, I’m prioritizing keeping Quackity.” George replies.
“Now help me lug my drums back to the van, I’m tired and want to be back at the apartment.”

Sapnap huffs fondly, but sets his guitars down to help the older move his instrument. “Dream, make sure the van’s unlocked and open, will ya?”

Dream nods, tracking ahead of the two to check the van.

“I think we’ll be fine, you know.” Sapnap says. George hums noncommittally. “They’re both great. You gotta open up to them, you were opening up with Quackity. I saw you.” George avoids his gaze. Sapnap lets out a breath of laughter as Dream holds the door open for them and they set the drum set down in the back, securing it in place. “Alright boys, let’s get the rest of the stuff and get home, I’m exhausted.

-

Karl Jacobs, Quackity, Dweam, Drumstick Up His Ass

You named the conversation "The Feral Boys"

Hey guys! This is Sapnap, you two are who we're inviting to join our band! Quackity, you've been confirmed, Karl, we wanna make sure you work well with Quackity, so we're gonna try to get you both up here for a rehearsal on Saturday.

Are you free?

Karl Jacobs

Awesome!

And yeah, I'm free all Saturday.

Can you guys introduce yourselves so I can enter your names into my contacts?

Quackity

Hey Karl, I'm Quackity!

Karl Jacobs

Pleasure!

Dweam

I'm Dream, congrats you two

Drumstick Up His Ass

And this is George.

Quackity

Oh shit, proper punctuation 0.0

Yeah, he's like that. Dw about it.

Karl Jacobs

Thanks, I've gotcha both in my phone now

Cool. does 3PM on Saturday work for everyone?

Karl Jacobs

Yup :)

Quackity

Yes!

Dweam

Works for me

Drumstick Up His Ass

What if I said no.

I'd call bullshit because I can look at the calendar and know you've got nothing.

Drumstick Up His Ass

Awfully presumptuous. But fine.

Awesome, see you all then! Feel free to use this chat to get to know each other in the mean
time!

-

Everything was coming together, Sapnap thought as they arrived home, George disappearing to his room near immediately while Dream flipped on the TV, Sapnap joining him on the couch beside him.

Coming together indeed.

Chapter End Notes

Aaaand I hope y'all enjoyed!

Thanks for reading this chapter, next chapter coming next Sunday, ofc!

Make sure to leave your kudos and comments (I reply to them al!) and check out my

[twitter](#)! Let's be moots!

See y'all next time,
Cure!

Turn It Up

Chapter Summary

5/5 Feral Boys content. In the form of playing 'American Idiot' together

Chapter Notes

Oho? What's this? A midnight update? Ha, yeah, I figured I would because *technically* it's Sunday where I am (EST) and I am also incredibly impatient. (And also incredibly busy tomorrow. Today?)

Fun fact, one of the possible titles for this fic was going to be 'Turn It Up' based on the song by The Wrecks that this chapter has been given as it's namesake.

Anyways, enjoy, don't forget to follow me on [twitter](#), I super love being able to chat with you all and interact! I follow back anyone who's active, so definitely be sure to join us!

Thank you all for the incredible support on this fic so far, I'm having a blast writing it <3

Anyways, on to the fic!

-

BETA'd once.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Saturday rolls around, and Sapnap messages the chat the address of their studio, a lucky find Sapnap had procured while socializing at a venue. The owner, a man named Jack Manifold, just so happened to be offering the studio's rent at a lowered price, something about his competition, and some kid named Tommy (who Sapnap recognized vaguely, for some reason).

So Sapnap had jumped at the opportunity, and a partnership had formed. In exchange for the lowered rent, The Feral Boys had to provide advertising for the studio, somewhat like a sponsorship. And it was easy enough to recommend quality services, so to Sapnap, and the rest of his group, it had been a no brainer to accept.

So here he stood at the entrance, dressed casually in a white tank and black sweatpants, eyes scanning the parking lot for the two new members meant to be showing up. While Dream and George were setting up their instruments and equipment, Sapnap was on doorman duty as he checked his phone intermittently, ready to welcome Karl and Quackity to their studio.

Before long, he spots a familiar, colorful mass stepping out of an equally colorful, and beat up, Honda, and he waves over Karl excitedly. The taller waves back, taking a moment to slip his guitar case over his shoulder before walking up to Sapnap with a smile.

“Hey man, good to see you again.” The brunette greets as Sapnap claps his hand.

“And you, congrats on passing George’s standards.” He replies, getting a giggle out of Karl.

“I’m glad I’m up to code.” He says back mischievously, eyes glittering. It’s Sapnap’s turn to snort out a laugh, lips quirking into a grin at the guitarist’s playful quip.

“We’ve just gotta wait for our Lead Guitarist to show up, Quackity, and we can head in. Dream and George are setting up inside.” Sapnap explains. “Usually, we don’t need to set up, since it’s technically our own private studio, but since we had auditions somewhere else, we needed to move our equipment.”

“Gotcha.” Karl nods as Sapnap returns to scanning the parking lot. There’s no sign of any new vehicles pulling in, and a brief check on his phone shows the time is 3:10.

“I’ll give him 5 more minutes, but George is gonna kick my ass if we’re later than 20, and Quackity is not worth getting yelled at by George just yet.” Sapnap says, and Karl laughs as he joins in scanning the parking lot with the bassist.

“Is he really that scary?” He asks, and Sapnap sighs.

“Eh, not really. It’s just annoying. And his accent makes him sound like some super posh critic. Like Gordon Ramsey.” He pauses to side-eye Karl with a smile. “But no worries, he *probably* won’t lecture you so soon. I’ve given him instructions not to. Whether he’ll follow it... well..” Sapnap shrugs, and Karl just lets out a sharp huff of laughter.

“Good to know I guess? He’s not, like, crazy though, right? He was harsh at the auditions, but I figured that was just being extra.” The brunette checks, and Sapnap shakes his head.

“Yeah, auditions added a bit of hyper-criticism to him. And nah, not crazy. Just defensive. He’s still not over our first lead from forever ago, and it shows. Just get past his defenses and he’s alright.” Sapnap scans the lot again. “Nobody usually sticks around long enough to get past that though.” He fixes his gaze on Karl, regarding him with a slight err of warning and thought. “I hope you do. We really need it.”

Karl says nothing, but turns back to scanning for Quackity with a brief nod. “I’ll take your word for him and do my best.”

“That’s all I can ask.” Sapnap replies as he reads 3:15 on his phone. “Alright then, let’s hope he shows up eventually.” The shorter replies, running his hand through his fringe as he turns to head inside.

He’s stopped by the sound of a vicious engine, the choppy putter of a motorcycle wheeling through his ears. He turns around to see a familiarly dressed figure sliding haphazardly into a parking spot, helmet nearly torn off and chest heaving as he dismounts. While he’s still wearing the familiar Adidas jacket Sapnap remembers, today’s pants are a much looser much more frayed selection paired with a set of black, navy, and yellow combat boots.

The helmet comes off, a deep blue beanie almost immediately replaces it, and Sapnap is briefly mesmerized by the man running a hand through his hair and tucking it swiftly under the brim. It’s somewhat stunning, the rugged feel of the motorcycle parked next to him as is the practiced ease with which he fixes his hair. It’s... incredibly attractive.

“Woah.” Karl breathes from beside him, eyes as trained on Quackity as Sapnap’s are.

“Yeah. Woah.” Sapnap echoes as the shorter slips his guitar off his bike over his shoulder, greeting the two with a wide smile.

“Sorry about being late! Traffic on 40 was *insane*, must've been an accident or something.”

Sapnap will not lie and say he's not focused on the sheen of sweat adding a gorgeous glow to Quackity in the afternoon sun, but being the professional that he is, he manages to tear his gaze away from the younger in favor of introducing Karl.

However, the taller beats him to it.

“Karl Jacobs.” The brunette greets eagerly, holding a hand out that Quackity takes easily, eyes giving a slow onceover to Karl, lips quirking up at the end of it.

It's delightfully alluring, and Sapnap isn't even the subject of the heavy gaze.

“Well hello Karl Jacobs, I'm Quackity.” Karl seems as starstruck as Sapnap did the first time he saw Quackity perform, and if he's here now, Sapnap can't wait to see Karl's reaction to Quackity actually performing.

Karl doesn't release the handshake as early as one normally would, but Quackity doesn't seem to mind. Though, the shorter does switch his gaze to Sapnap.

“Hey dude, good to see you again. Can't wait to see all 5 of us in action, huh?” He says, raising a brow at the two consecutively.

Sapnap nods. “Absolutely, man, come one, let's head up and I'll show you two around.” Quackity grins happily as Sapnap holds the door for the two, messaging George that they were on their way and getting a flurry of variously angry replies.

He tucks his phone in his pocket and focuses on the far more interesting activity in front of him.

“So, welcome to Manifold Studios, home of the Feral Boys and some other guys, they're not important.” Sapnap says with a wink, Karl and Quackity both responding with a snort of laughter. “We're gonna be heading to floor 3 where we have our own personal studio where you're more than welcome to store your instruments when we're not practicing. It's more than safe, and we've never had any problems.” He assures as he beckons them into the elevator.

“Alright, good deal! So, what, are you guys like hot-shots? Private studios aren't cheap.” Quackity notes, and Sapnap's posture straightens in pride.

“You're correct, they *aren't*. We don't consider ourselves ‘hot-shots’ necessarily, it's not like we have more than a couple covers available online, but yours truly is fantastic at making connections. So Feral Boys have been proudly partnered with Manifold Studios for the past year and a half.” He explains, both guitarists humming appreciatively at his response. “Anyways, we've got some original songs, but none released because, well, we haven't exactly had a full team stick around long enough to actually record it.”

“Excuse me for being so bold, but, is there, like, a reason why? It's not exactly reassuring to hear a band you're thinking of joining has gone through members so quickly.” Karl comments, and Sapnap sighs.

“It's... not any one reason really, people just find George and Dream difficult to work with.” Karl and Quackity share a look, and Sapnap desperately hopes his comments won't deter them from joining. “But really you guys should be fine! You already passed auditions with flying colors, and

I'll try to be a buffer as much as I can. Just..." Sapnap deliberates how he can phrase his wording so as not to be too off-putting. "I dunno, stand up for yourself. I'll make sure you're heard. We... really need you." He finishes, hearing the hint of desperation in his voice.

Neither say anything as the elevator docks and the doors slide open, Sapnap righting himself and putting a smile on his face.

"Anyways, we're room 014 down this hallway here, I was telling Karl, but Dream and George will have everything set up. Probably won't be happy we're as late as we are but he'll have to deal." Sapnap amends, and Quackity lets out a small 'Sorry' in response. Sapnap waves a hand dismissively as he opens the door to the sound of George warming up with short sequences on his drum set and Dream plucking hesitantly at Sapnap's electric guitar.

"Hands off the Fender, Dreamy." Sapnap says, the older immediately setting down the guitar and feigning innocence.

"You're late." George comments as he inspects something on his cymbals.

"Yeah, that would be my fault." Quackity chimes in, and George raises a brow briefly, yet says nothing.

"Doesn't matter George, we're still here. Q and Karl have been briefed, Quackity, there's an amp over there for you to hook into, and Karl you're over on Dream's side. Adjust anything you want, we'll see how we function on your settings first and adjust if needed." Sapnap says, motioning in the directions for each of the guitarists consecutively.

"'Q'?" Quackity muses teasingly as he pulls out his guitar. Sapnap grabs his bass from where it's resting in a stand a little ways behind Quackity.

"Yeah. Sorry, do you mind?" He asks, plugging his precision bass into the amp and running a few riffs.

"Nah, you're good." He hears the shorter reply before a sharp lick runs through the studio.

"Alright, you guys have got some damn good acoustics." Quackity compliments, and not a moment later, Karl is joining in with his own scales, his Les Paul filling the sound.

"Definitely. But, I think anything is better than my poor parent's basement." Karl says with a laugh, the rest save for George grinning alongside him.

The guitarists cycle through various warmups, adjusting strings and amps, allowing Dream to warm his voice up alongside the different chords played, until they feel prepared, turning to George for the next direction.

"We'll probably just have you guys stick with 1985 seeing as you both know it." George says, met with general agreements from Karl and Quackity.

It's Sapnap who groans, chiming in his own two cents. "Oh god please, I am so tired of hearing that song though." He looks at Karl and Quackity in turn. "Surely, you guys have to know some other songs?"

They nod, and George moves to speak but Sapnap cuts him off. "George, come on you can't tell me you're not tired of it either." the older glares at him but says nothing. "Come on, any blink-182? Green Day?"

Quackity nods. "I mean, yeah, who doesn't?" He launches into the intro to 'American Idiot',

singing the vocals into the mic and laughing as he cuts himself off after the first line.

Sapnap grins. “That’s a good one! Dream, you still know it right? George? Karl, are you familiar?”

Dream nods, pulling out his phone to presumably scan the lyrics, and George sighs but nods. Karl too starts plucking the rhythm on his guitar, jogging his memory as Sapnap joins him idly.

“Alright, awesome.” Sapnap says as the group takes a moment to refamiliarize.

“Fine.” George says eventually. “1, 2, 3, 4-”

Quackity jumps into the chords he’d played previous, Karl filling the sound in the 3rd measure and Dream taking the lead on the vocals as the first line comes.

Don’t wanna be an American Idiot

Quackity is, of course, taking liberties with the general riffs of the song in mind, but Karl is adjusting perfectly, and the 5 together sound better than Sapnap could’ve hoped.

With George’s vigorous drumming, keeping the fast-paced but steady rhythm, it’s not hard for the rest to keep in perfect time, even as Quackity extrapolates on lead, and Sapnap ad libs some backing vocals.

The song is brought together perfectly by Dream’s strong vocals, gritty as he imitates the original singer of the song while adding his own spin. Sapnap realizes that between Quackity’s creative playing and Dream’s vocal prowess, they’ve really taken the song and made it wonderfully their own.

Welcome to a new kind of tension

All across the alienation

Where everything isn’t meant to be okay

Television dreams of tomorrow,

We’re not the ones who’re meant to follow

For that’s enough to argue

George takes the lead on drums, adding some finesse to the solo before Quackity’s leading back in with his Ibanez and taking the group through his own solo. Karl backs him perfectly, and lets the shorter have the spotlight as he plays with all of the flair Sapnap had observed during his initial audition.

He’s getting into it as he’s given his head, and even though Sapnap’s main view is the lead’s back, the mirror on the opposite wall gives him a perfect view of the sheer dynamic intensity Quackity is playing with.

His face is quirked into a devilishly handsome smirk as he focuses on his fingers, the determination attractive even in the bright lights of the studio. His hands seem to fly across the chords seamlessly, even as Sapnap knows it’s entirely new chords he’s improvising on the spot.

It’s amazing, the proficiency with which the older can play, and Sapnap can’t help the spark of satisfaction that curls in his gut at finding such a good lead.

He dares a glance to Karl, whose eyes are flipping focus between his guitar and Quackity, keeping up and keeping pace as Quackity shreds away. He too is doing just fine, if not fantastic at his job, honey brown eyes curious and interested as their lead guitarist pulls them forward, pausing only for

George to lead to the final chorus with Karl taking his 5 seconds of fame.

*Don't wanna be an American idiot,
One nation controlled by the media*

The song begins it's lead out as they enter the final stanzas, Dream taking them home with some impromptu backing vocals from Sapnap and Quackity, and even Karl joining in on the action.

As the final riffs are played with a flair from Karl and Quackity, they finish with a whoop, the only sounds in the studio the heavy panting of the group after a well-played song.

It's quiet as the group chug water, the studio feeling 10 times hotter from the practically tangible energy.

"Holy shit." Sapnap finally says, tilting his head back, hair falling to the sides. His right hand rests loosely on the neck of his guitar, the other hanging over the body and clutching at his water bottle. "That was absolutely epic."

There's a general murmur of agreement, and relieved, but tired laughs as the group comes down from the high.

"I guess we don't have to worry about whether or not Quackity and Karl work well with each other." Dream muses from the mic, and Sapnap grins.

"Definitely not." He affirms, shifting his head back into place as he regards Quackity and Karl, the latter of which boasting bright eyes and a sharp fascination, one Sapnap predicted he'd have after playing with the enigma that is Quackity. "You guys are definitely in if you want it. Because we definitely want you."

Dream nods, and while George doesn't say anything, Sapnap doesn't miss the satisfied look in his eyes. Good.

"Well I don't know about you Karl, but I'm definitely in, fuck yeah, let's go!" Quackity exclaims, holding his hand out for Sapnap to high-five. The younger does, grinning wickedly at their new lead guitarist.

"Count me in too, that was the most fun I've had in ages, no chance I'm passing this up, are you kidding?" Karl replies too, a bright grin crossing his face. "Quackity, you are a monster on Lead, holy honk."

Dream smiles now too, holding his hand to high-five Karl who's closer to him. "Awesome man, we're glad to have you."

"You're both generally competent, at least enough to get us through Sunset." George finally states, and everyone groans at the oldest's clipped words.

But Sapnap and Dream, who both have learned how to read between the lines of George's ever-fickle personality, know that that's the best possible response they could get right now.

"I'll send you guys some of the completed works of our original discography so you can learn them and help decide what song we perform for Sunset. Practices are on Tuesdays and Thursdays, at 3PM. Be here on time or suffer the consequences." George adds on, already pulling out his phone to send the details to the group chat.

"Uh, timing can be changed if other days and times work better." Sapnap amends and George

glares at him. Dream just nods, and George shifts the attention of his stare to Dream. Neither pay any mind.

Karl and Quackity just nod.

“For the rest of our session, we’ll start working through ‘Turn It Up’ and see how that fits.” George says, handing out some sheet music to the group. There’s silence as the two newest members read through it and Dream and Sapnap review it.

“Wow, you wrote this?” Quackity asks appreciatively.

“Dream and I, yes. He’s the main lyricist, I give his words melody and tune. And we consult Sapnap for the guitar stuff because neither of us know what to do with that.” Sapnap grins proudly at his mention, and Quackity nods.

“Nice. It’s really nice from what I’m reading in my head.” The shorter pauses to glance around the group. “And I bet it will sound even better when we all play it.”

George’s expression softens ever so slightly as he nods at Quackity’s compliment.

“Well, only one way to find out.” He takes his seat at his drum set, and the rest pick up their instruments. “Let’s butcher our way for this first run-through.”

Chapter End Notes

Heyooo!

I hope you enjoyed this chapter, and I will, of course, see you next Sunday.

Please leave your kudos and comments down below (I reply to all comments!) and check out my [twitter](#) for a fun community and more content!

See you guys next week,

-Cure

Figure This Out

Chapter Summary

Sapnap is tired of George's shit.

Chapter Notes

Hello everyone welcome back!

We got almost 500 hits in one week, which is, like, super cool, so thank you all! We also have 100 comments on this work, and while half of those comments are my replies, 50 is still a crazy amount for me! I can't believe we're about to hit 1k hits too!

Make sure to check out (and maybe follow) my [twitter](#) I'm at 68 followers and I would really like 69 followers, so if you wouldn't mind-
We have a really cool community over there and I follow back anyone who's active and follows me!

Without further ado, enjoy this chapter. I think my new minimum word count is starting to be closer to 3k which is about 1000 more than the baseline for what Out Of The Woods was 0.0

-

BETA'd once

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The rest of the 3 hour long session is spent working on the piece George had presented, and they sound good, even after one run through of the piece. Quackity, Sapnap comes to know, is a fast learner. Perhaps it's his natural ability with an electric guitar, or his general wisdom with the instrument overall, but he works through the music much easier than Karl.

But even while Karl takes more time to pick up on the content, he doesn't take long. And between Quackity being able to easily regurgitate what he's already worked through in simpler terms, and Sapnap's knowledge of the piece from working on and performing it, Karl figures it out pretty easily too.

By the end of the session, they've managed one full run through of the piece with minimal hiccups. And even though Quackity hasn't mastered the piece enough to add his usual improved flair, and Karl hasn't quite been able to play at full tempo, the piece is passable at it's current status, and Sapnap can't wait to hear their final runthrough in the future.

After one session, having an entire original song at the place it is currently (no matter how rough) is great pacing for Sunset, and bodes well for their ability to put together a full set.

They had parted ways with the other two guitarists at just past 6:10, and Sapnap had chatted genially with them both on the way to their respective vehicles. He'd learned Karl was 23, and had majored in Video Production as he'd wanted to be a music video producer if being in a band didn't work out. Sapnap had assured him that not only would being in a band work out, but that when the Feral Boys needed a music video done, he was more than welcome to take the lead.

Karl had called him an optimist as he hopped into the driver's side of his car, but Sapnap had only grinned as the older drove away, heart fluttering in his chest.

On Quackity's side, the lead guitarist told him he was 22, the same as Sapnap, and that he had gone to college for Music Production (and minored in political science). He followed up with the fact that he hoped to write music while continuing to perform himself, and Sapnap had enthusiastically said he'd talk to George about writing for the Feral Boys. Quackity had grinned and thanked him, golden light from the setting sun casting a gorgeous filter over the already attractive man before him.

Sapnap had waved as he walked over to Dream's Subaru on the other side of the lot, leaning against the side of the beat-up 2009 Legacy next to George.

"They're crazy good." Sapnap says as he watches Quackity's motorcycle tear out of the parking lot in the evening sun. He's exhausted from the session, and the week in general, but in a relatively good mood. George lets out a non-committal hum from beside him where the brunette is adjusting his hair in the reflection of their car's window.

Sapnap rolls his eyes as a sear of frustration at the lack-luster reply courses through his body. He crosses his arms where they had previously been resting against the car door and tries not to let the George-typical response get to him too much. "You're actually such a dick sometimes. You better not run them off, God." He says, meaning to keep the air light. It's hard though, when he has half a mind to bully George into giving any sort of validation for his hard work.

When all he wants is for George to give him one non-backhanded compliment. "Can't you give me *something*?" he tries, because maybe, just maybe, today's session has proved how valuable Quackity and Karl both are.

George finishes his 'beauty-check' and faces Sapnap, regarding him with a tired stare, and Sapnap already knows he won't be getting the answer he wants. "They're fine. They'll do." George finally says. Sapnap sighs and looks away, frustrated and perhaps just as exhausted as the brunette. "What do you want me to say?" The older asks, a brow raising sardonically as he finishes, and Sapnap scoffs, and that's all he can take of George and his attitude. He lets out some of the steam he's been holding back, desperate for some sort of response other than indifference.

"How you actually feel about them? I don't know! You've been so hard to get to ever since-" He stops before he can finish the sentence, knowing it's a step too far for George, but it's too late. The taller whips around and pins Sapnap against the car with a single glare, effectively cutting the younger off. The cicadas chirping from the trees on the edge of the lot seem deafening and Dream's absence feels even more potent as George speaks, words harsh and poignant.

"Don't say his name." Sapnap swipes his tongue against his teeth, lips pursed as George stares him down. He shouldn't push. Not right now, really, when they're both tired after a long and arduous session. When Sapnap knows George wants nothing more than to go home and shower, relax in his room, and get some shitty takeout, and especially not when that sounds just as appealing to himself right now.

But along with that shade of tiredness comes the tiredness from a week spent organizing and

socializing, working under pressure to put together a band, to make it *work*, with little to no positive feedback from the person he'd been trying to make it work for most.

So, against his better mind, he doesn't relent, and instead pushes himself off the side of the car and into George's personal space, silently cursing the 1 inch difference between them that forces him to shift his eyes ever so slightly upwards.

"Oh yeah? Don't? Why not? It's almost been a *year* George. He's a memory to all of us except for you." Sapnap reprimands, voice low as he feels his frustrations bubble to the surface, months of pent up frustrations mounting with the effort he's put in for the entire week previous. "And I have spent the past *week* working on making this band whole again, because if you want to show him up so badly, you're gonna need more than a half-ass singer, a stupid drumset, and a single guitarist." He goes on, walking forward and forcing George backwards and further in the parking lot.

He watches the brunette's eyes flash indignantly.

"You're the one who wants to win Sunset so bad, so why the hell aren't you acting like it? *I* was the one who contacted Bad to get us new marketing materials *overnight*. *I* was the one to spend all day Friday putting up posters, formatting Instagram and Twitter and blog posts, *I* did that." Sapnap says, and it feels good to finally release the emotions he'd been holding inside him the entire past week while they got through auditions.

It feels good to yell, to reprimand, to berate when he'd previously been the tail end of George's own chides.

He allows a brief silence to let the words sit, the only sound the distant highway and the late July insects in the tall grass. George says nothing, but Sapnap doesn't miss the brief flinch in the shorter's otherwise stagnant expression.

"*I* was the one who advocated for Karl, an incredibly talented and versatile individual, and all I got from it was nonchalance from both you and Dream. *I* was the one who told *you* we should wait a little bit longer and lo-and-behold, Quackity, the best damn electric guitarist I've heard in a long time, shows up. I put together a *kick-ass* band in 1 week, and the most I've gotten from you has been that they're 'alright.'."

He watches Dream approach the two in his periphery but doesn't sway his attention from George where the drummer is slowly starting to falter. Good.

"They deserve more, *I* deserve more." He says as Dream rests a careful hand on either of their shoulders, gently putting space between the two before things can get too far, and Sapnap does something he might regret.

"Alright Sap, easy." Dream calls gently, but his tone makes Sapnap even more frustrated. Because why should he be the one being told to go 'easy' when it was George who required that reprimand more? He flips his head to face Dream, and though the height difference between him and George was barely perceptible, the height difference between him and Dream *is*.

"No, did you know that I had to explain off George's behavior to Quackity and Karl because they were worried about joining a band who's previous members had come and gone as fast as they had?" Sapnap exclaims, switching his anger on the blond. "I had to practically beg them to stick around longer, convince them that George wasn't as bad as he seems, but I'll be honest, at this point, I'm this close to fucking off and starting a new band with those two!"

"Sapnap-"

“Because at least then I wouldn’t have to deal with a pretentious-ass drummer who can’t fucking move on!” He shouts, switching his glare back to George who meets him with an equal look of hostility.

The sound of the cicadas is deafening in the lot as Sapnap heaves a breath in the otherwise silent air.

Dream says nothing, but at least has the decency to look slightly sympathetic as he finally sighs and regards them both. “Ok, look, I think everyone needs some rest and some food, Sapnap, your feelings are understandable, but I don’t think yelling them at George is going to do anything.” The taller says. “And George, Sapnap has been working really hard this past week, and you have been... a little difficult. Let’s get into the car for now, we’ll finish this discussion after some food, ok?”

Sapnap swallows stiffly, still glaring at George, but the promise of food and rest, as well as the validation Dream’s given him, take priority over the pool of emotions still lying dormant in his mind.

“Fine.” He eventually says, breaking the connection between his and George’s gaze.

“*Fine.*” He hears George breathe out from behind him as a car door opens and the brunette disappears into the backseat.

Sapnap huffs lightly under his breath as he slides into the passenger side and clicks his seatbelt, Dream beginning the drive back to the apartment.

The only sound is the soft murmur of ads coming from the radio and the overwhelming silence of a car full of tired and frustrated friends.

-

After a delicious meal of pork fried rice and sesame chicken, Sapnap is, admittedly, feeling loads better. The episode of Brooklyn 99 that Dream had thrown up on the TV to accompany the meal had also eased the tension to a palatable amount so that dinner wasn’t an entirely awkward affair, and Sapnap can stand to look at George without wanting to punch him.

As the show comes to a close, the outro playing, Sapnap watches Dream set his takeout down, turn off the TV, and clap his hands together.

“Alright, couple’s therapy with Dr. Dream.” The blond begins, and both Sapnap and George scoff. “Sapnap, you’re feeling upset and underappreciated. George, you don’t understand why.”

“I never said *that*.” George cuts in, crossing his arms from where he’s sat on the recliner to the side of the sofa. Sapnap scowls, and George reflects his expression right back to him.

“Ok, fine, why are you upset?” Dream counters, leaning forward to rest his body weight on his thighs and cradle his chin in his hands. Sapnap wants to interject, wants to insult George and say he’s ‘Upset for no reason.’ or ‘Because he can’t move on from a lead guitarist who’s clearly moved on from us.’ but he respects Dream’s authority and shuts up, letting George answer, albeit grudgingly.

“Because he brought up-” George pauses to steal a brief glare at Sapnap. “*him.*”

Dream sighs heavily as Sapnap rolls his eyes and ragdolls dramatically against the arm of the sofa. He doesn’t understand George’s inability to move on. George was always in the past, stuck in it, and Sapnap was tired of having to make everything work while George refused to move on.

Dream evidently seems to think something similar as he averts his eyes to study the lo mein on the coffee table in front of them with a hefty sigh. “Ok, well, I can understand that, I guess.”

George’s eyes trace the black-screened TV at the front of the room. Sapnap watches him, observes his posture and expression, and wishes he could see even a hint of emotion through his poker face.

“But, I do think you owe... some thanks to Sapnap here. And an apology for making it a little difficult for him.” Dream finally says, and Sapnap grins victoriously, fixing his posture to sit upright. George doesn’t look at either of them, but Sapnap doesn’t miss his expression faltering ever so slightly, a break in the otherwise indifferent facade. Satisfaction flares in Sapnap’s gut as he gains the high ground.

“Ugh, fine. Thank you, Sapnap.” He says at last. Sapnap just grins, crossing his own arms to mirror George, though far more triumphantly. He could decide to let that be that, but he’s feeling bulletproof with Dream on his side, so he pushes more.

“Thank me for *what*?” The shorter asks, relief and triumph near palpable on his tongue. George glares at him, looking to Dream to perhaps reprimand Sapnap, but the taller does not and says nothing, shaking his head a little and nodding slightly in Sapnap’s direction.

The incredulous look on George’s face at being shot-down by Dream is almost enough for Sapnap to feel entirely vindicated, but he still needs-

“...for putting together auditions and finding us not one but two-” the brunette pauses, glances to Dream briefly and then back to Sapnap, eyes shifting to survey the edge of the couch. “-admittedly incredible guitarists.”

The last part is mumbled so softly Sapnap almost doesn’t hear it, but as the words are said, Sapnap feels a sharp string of validation jolt through his body, and it feels *good*. The energy from those words is enough to have Sapnap jitter in his seat happily and wring his fingers together in a shuttered show of silent pride.

He’s certain he’s flushing too, and despite knowing it’s the exact words he deserves, it doesn’t change the fact that compliments from George are extremely rare, and even under slightly forced circumstances, one compliment from the older is worth 20 from anyone else.

“Thank you, George.” Sapnap breathes out happily, unable to stop the fierce grin on his face. George looks up to meet Sapnap’s eyes for a split second before they’re back to the couch, but Sapnap doesn’t miss the flush high on the brunette’s cheeks as he mumbles out a “You’re welcome.”

“Ok! And Sapnap, I owe you a little more thanks too.” Dream says with a small, pleased smile. Sapnap turns to Dream happily, swiping back his hair as he awaits his best friend’s kudos. “You’ve done a great job this past week, thank you for your hard work. As George said, you got us some really good guitarists, so, thank you for giving us a chance for Sunset.”

Sapnap grins, finally satisfied and living on the praise high. “Why *thank* you Dream, I know, I’m pretty awesome, I’m glad you’ve both finally realized this.” He teases to ease the slight tension.

It works as George pulls his head up to scoff. “Don’t get too full of yourself, Sapnap.” the older replies haughtily and Sapnap just laughs, happy to not be at odds with his friend and content with the conclusion that Dream had helped them reach.

It’s why they’ve always made such a good trio, Sapnap thinks.

“See, George, this is why you can’t be a jerk to him too often or else we’ll have to have more conversations like this that only boost his ego more.” Dream comments after letting loose a sharp wheeze of laughter. Sapnap’s jaw falls open at the sudden twist of stances and he lunges towards Dream on the other side of the couch.

“Woah, hey, come on!” He squawks indignantly, wrapping his arm around Dream’s neck in a chokehold. “Jackass.” Sapnap teases as he ruffles the blonde’s hair spitefully, the taller moving to pull Sapnap’s arms from around him to no avail as he continues to fight through a fit of giggles.

“S-Sapnap, come on, let go.” Dream manages between wheezes, but Sapnap refuses, tugging his friend down onto the sofa and wrangling him against the cushions.

“George! Grab his stupid spider legs!” Sapnap calls to the older, but George just fixes him with a raised brow and unimpressed grin.

“You’re on your own.” He replies, making to stand up and clear some of the food from the table as Sapnap continues to wrestle Dream.

As the two pause in their battle, they share a look, a silent conversation, as they observe George peacefully avoiding their tiff. Sapnap nods, silently letting his arms fall loose from around Dream’s neck and positioning himself slightly off to the side.

“Oh, George!” Dream calls, and as the brunette looks up, he’s met with Sapnap and Dream tackling him into the floor as he lets out a startled screech, limbs floundering as he tries to get loose.

“SAPNAP! DREAM! Let me GO!” He calls between screeches as the two laugh from where they’re bullying him into the floor, Sapnap demobilizing his arms while Dream gets the oldest’s legs, wheezing the entire time.

Sapnap pulls George into a forced backhug while Dream uses his ridiculously long arms to wrap both of them into a front hug.

“Georgie~” Sapnap teases next to his ear as he finally stops resisting and lets the two hug him from either side.

“Brutes.” He bites back, but doesn’t refuse their affection as they hug for a few moments more.

When they’re done, Sapnap and Dream loose their grips and fall to the side of George, laying next to the brunette on the floor, and breathing heavily from the previous activity. Sapnap grins fondly to himself in the dark light of the living room, relishing in the comfortable silence that has amounted.

“You love us, George.” Dream finally says, and George scoffs, but doesn’t deny it.

“And you’ll love the Feral Boys even more after we win Sunset with our awesome team.” Sapnap chimes in, Dream chuckling from his left.

“Yeah, yeah, whatever. You two better help me clean up this takeout, or I might just steal Sapnap’s idea of starting a band with just Quackity and Karl.” George finally says, sitting up and looking at Sapnap and Dream each in turn. “I think they’d be better off with a drummer as opposed to another guitarist anyways.” He follows up, flicking Sapnap’s face lightly.

“Ow. Fine, message received.” He replies, leaning up onto his elbows. “I’ll grab the rice and chicken, you grab the lo mein and egg rolls?”

George nods and brings himself to his feet, dusting his hands off on his pants. “That leaves Dream to the drinks and therefore the dishes, come on Sapnap.” The younger grins as Dream scrambles to his feet to avoid having to do the dishes, but he’s too late as George and Sapnap sweep the food off the table leaving only the dishes behind.

“You guys suck!” They hear the blonde call from the living room as George smirks at Sapnap in the kitchen and they throw away the food.

“Have fun Dreamie~” Sapnap teases as they watch the tallest struggle to juggle the glasses and hobble into the kitchen.

From back in the living room, Sapnap and George smile happily at each other, and the younger hopes one day, he’ll see George smile like this with Quackity and Karl too.

Chapter End Notes

Well I hope you enjoyed some dream team content, it was my first time writing just the three of them interacting for an entire chapter, so I hope I did them justice. Anticipate more DT moments in the future, as we are in Sapnap POV, and currently, all 5 feral boys haven't bonded fully!

But no worries, that's what future chapters are for lolol.

Make sure to check out my [twitter](#) for updates, an amazing community, and more. Please follow and get me to 69 followers, that's all I've ever wanted in life please-

And of course, make sure to leave your kudos and comments, I reply to them all!

See you guys next Sunday,
-Cure

James Dean

Chapter Summary

Practice session 2 with 5/5 feral boys content.

Chapter Notes

LET'S GO CHUNKY CHAPTER!!!

5k+ words AND COUNTING, I love having the free-time to actually write and just enjoy myself

Anyways, plugging the [twitter](#) once again bc we hit NOT ONLY 69 follows this past week, but 80 which is super cool! Definitely think about following, so long as you're active, I follow back, we have a lot of fun, and it's an amazing community over there.

Thank you guys for the support, as always, special shoutout to [MentalCarnival](#) for helping me pick out a ride for Quackity and being my on-site carologist. Check out her street racing au, it's amazing and has quality background karlnapity!

Now that that's out of the way, onto the chapter! Enjoy!

-

BETA'd Once heehee

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Another week passes far too quickly, and Sapnap eyes the calendar above his desk nervously. 2 weeks. 2 Weeks until Sunset Band Fever and at least 20 minutes worth of songs left to prepare.

They're gonna need more frequent practices.

While George had sent Quackity and Karl home with not only the sheet music for 'Turn It Up', but also for the 4 other tracks from their planned EP, there's a difference between practicing by yourself and practicing with a group. They'd decided to practice on just Saturdays, since it seem to fit everyone's schedule better than the previous rehearsal times, but it just won't do to be prepared for Sunset.

And the turn around for when the pieces need to be learned is... incredibly quick. 3 practices total in the span of the month they have left will not be enough to cut it.

He groans as he wanders into the communal space of the shared apartment with Dream and George, sighing as he catches the two talking conspiratorily over whatever Dream is attempting to cook.

The key word being attempting, because as Sapnap pads forward into the kitchen, the scent of burning... eggs? Sure. is quite apprent. And Sapnap knows the cause of Dream's distraction is sat

on the counter beside the stove, smiling coyly as he says something that has Dream flushing.

Great.

So now, on top of actively planning for the band's success, he'll have to hardcore 3rd wheel while his two best friends have one of their "days". And maybe it would annoy Sapnap less if they were *actually* a couple, but in all their years of living together, and even longer years of being in a band together, neither had had the balls to say anything to one another.

So they were constantly stuck in this limbo of gay chicken, or something, Sapnap supposed, which was arguably worse than third wheeling an actual couple. Plus, it meant he had to listen to Dream wax poetic about George's pretty face or whatever, and look, don't get him wrong, objectively George *is* attractive, but certainly not Sapnap's type.

Sapnap's type just so happens to be honey brown eyes framed by swirling brunette hair and multicolor fingernails. Gentle laughs and sweater paws, hand-painted hondas and scrappy sneakers. Sapnap's type also happens to be motorcycle-riders, lean muscles and sharp, intelligent, midnight eyes. Jet black hair pulled into the smallest pony-tail he's ever seen, and sun-kissed skin made even more golden by the setting sun.

But you won't catch him waxing poetic to Dream *yet*, because at least he has human decency, and after years of listening to Dream constantly bemoan about how George will 'Never love him back' despite the numerous flirtatious gestures the older has initiated, Sapnap decided he would never give anyone else the fate.

So, with one more heavy sigh, he shoulders his way to the cabinet above Dream's head to grab some cheerios.

"Move, lovebirds." Dream looks away, flushed heavier than before, and even George sports some red tint on the apples of his cheeks and leans away from Dream as Sapnap snatches some milk from the fridge.

"We're not lovebirds." George tries, but Sapnap scoffs, shoving George perhaps a little extra harshly on his way to grab a bowl.

"Right, and Dream's not a pussy when it comes to spicy food." Dream *is* a pussy when it comes to spicy food, so Sapnap becomes the receiving end of George's pointed glare. Worth it.

In his peripherals, he watches Dream sigh at his burnt breakfast and start anew, and as the fresh scent of unburned eggs filters through the apartment, Sapnap knows that despite it all, there's no place he'd rather be.

Breakfast passes otherwise uneventfully, and as they finish their meals, depositing bowls into the sink to be dealt with later, Sapnap springs his thoughts on the pair.

"Alright, so. Sunset is just about 2 weeks away, I've been thinking we need to schedule some extra group practices." He starts, sipping what's left of his lukewarm coffee. Dream and George exchange a look, but nod slowly at the statement.

"You're probably right." Dream muses, brows furrowed as he runs the logistics in his head.

"I am right. We've got practice today, and I figure we work through, like, a mock set and workshop parts after. If a song needs extra attention, we mark it for later and after we complete the rough run through, we return to it." George nods as he speaks, seemingly agreeing, and Sapnap begins noting stuff down on his phone as they go along.

“We don’t have a full set though. For fully practiced, we’ve got our cover of ‘1985’, and likely ‘American Idiot’. Then, ideally, the 5 songs from our EP, That’s barely 21 minutes if you average a song for 3 minutes, and even if you include breaks and you and Dream’s dumb ‘talk to the audience’ moments, that’s maybe half an hour.” He counters, and Sapnap rolls his eyes.

“It’s called audience engagement, George, and it makes sure we have fans. Who, might I remind you, give us a *career*.” The brunette just raises an eyebrow. Sapnap huffs. “But yeah, we’re gonna need a couple more songs. I figure we bring that up today after practice and see what the other two’ve already got practiced. I can’t imagine someone like Quackity, who’s probably been a soloist for a while, doesn’t have something we can work off of. Karl too.”

“I say we shoot for about 10 songs, if we can.” Dream chimes in. “So I think that means we need 3 more, and they’re going to be covers.” It’s not a question, and Sapnap’s glad Dream isn’t as ambitious as he could be.

So he nods, jotting things down in the notes section of his phone.

“Ok, so, recap, today’s practice we’re running through what we’ve got of our full set, no stops. Should be around 20-30 minutes of playing. After that, we spend the rest of practice troubleshooting where the songs could be improved and brainstorm other songs to do covers of. We want 10, and hopefully, it can be songs we’ve performed in the past to work more easily. I figure we wait until we’re on the subject of other songs to bring up more practices.” Sapnap reiterates, typing on his phone and fixing typos as he reads back through.

“Yeah, sounds like a plan.” Dream says, and Sapnap looks up just in time to catch the tail end of George’s nod.

“Awesome. I’ll send it over to the groupchat, so Quackity and Karl can see it.” He says, bringing up the Feral Boys group chat on his phone, copying and pasting the text block into a message.

“And then you’re going out to get groceries because it’s your week.” George says with a smirk, and Sapnap pauses in his typing to fix George with a dead stare. The brunette’s expression is unwavering and triumphant.

“Ugh, fine, whatever, just send me the list, I know Dream’s got one.” he reasons, stalking off to get ready for the day as Dream pulls out his own phone.

-

The Feral Boys

Alright, practice is on for today at 3, here's the plan:

- Full run through of what we've got of the set so far (20-30 min)

1985

James Dean

American Idiot

Freaking Out

Panic Vertigo

Way With Words

Turn It Up

- Workshopping and fixing rough patches of the songs (rest of session)
- Brainstorming about 3 more covers to add to the set (looking for about 10 songs total, preferably songs we're all already familiar with so we can put our attention on our original music)
- Discuss some more times for practice

Sound good?

Hot Wheels

Sounds good!

I've for sure got some blink-182 up my sleeve ;]

Color Crush

Ooh yeah, me too! Maybe some more Bowling For Soup. Or Jimmy Eat World!

WAIT can we do Check Yes, Juliet? I love that song :D

Hot Wheels

FUCK YEAH, I haven't done that song in ages but the guitar line in that song hits!

Can confirm, we've definitely performed that before, Dream's kinda obsessed with We the Kings

Dweam

Yeah, because they're good.

Surgery Successful: Drumstick Removed

Check Yes, Juliet was their only hit. I stand by that.

Dweam

That's rich coming from the guy who used to think that MCR was peak Pop-Punk

Hot Wheels

No way, George had an emo phase????

Surgery Successful: Drumstick Removed

It was *not* an emo phase, and they have good music.

One G-Note and it's over

Hot Wheels

LMAO TELL EM SAP

Color Crush

Let's go? Sapnap's popping off?

Dweam

George used to wear black lipstick. And you should see the songs he wrote back then...

Surgery Successful: Drumstick Removed

Literally shut up? I wasn't the one who dyed a streak of my hair green like a loser.

Dweam

...

That was one time, and I thought it looked cool.

It definitely didn't

Hot Wheels

SAPNAP ON HIS TOXIC ARC TODAY

Dweam

Sapnap. Don't make me get the picture.

Surgery Successful: Drumstick Removed

Need we mention the Fall Out Boy phase?

...

dont

Color Crush

No, no, go on

Hot Wheels

^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^

PLEASE, I'll shut up, I'm sorry

Just *dont* send the picture

Or talk about that at all

Dweam

You're safe for now I guess

Surgery Successful: Drumstick Removed

One button and it's over

I said I'm sorry gogy, PLEASE

Surgery Successful: Drumstick Removed

Hm

I guess.

Count your blessings, Sapnap.

Hot Wheels

NO, I want to see emo Sapnap, pleaaaaase

Color Crush

Same, I need it, like actually

No, no, no you don't

And what about emo George huh?

Hot Wheels

Ok, I need both

Dreeaaaammm

Dreamyyyy

Color Crush

^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^

Dweam

One day.

NO

-

Quackity only shows up 10 minutes late today, rushing through the door of the studio frantically, but to much less of George's contempt.

"Quackity, what's up!" Sapnap greets, pulling the other into a hug, taking in the smell of summer air and ozone the shorter has brought in, shadowed by the brief notes of an underarm deodorant

working overtime.

“Nothing much! I’ve got a whole list of songs we can look at by the way.” The older says, waving his phone around, and Sapnap grins, pulling back to grab his guitar again, slinging it over his shoulder

“Which we’ll look at later, but you’re best to plug in your guitar and get started.” George comments from behind his drum set, and Sapnap sends George a warning glare the older silently scoffs at but obliges, relaxing his shoulders and demeanor as Quackity warms up.

“Alright, I’m good to go, ‘1985’, yeah? Let’s rock and roll.” Sapnap grins as George counts them in, and they start the familiar upbeat classic.

Sapnap realizes with a start it’s the first time the full group has played it together, and if it sounded good before, it sounds even better now.

With all 5 members pulling their weight, the perfect executions from the individual auditions being brought together, and the sheer energy from the song itself, ‘1985’ takes a whole new form in the Feral Boys’ studio.

Quackity, is, of course, flying through the verses with practiced ease, but Karl, ever flexible and ever surprising, even dares to ad-lib some bits himself, clearly out of practiced ease, and likely inspired by Quackity’s infectious playing. The two’s guitars play in tandem and sound absolutely wonderful.

The shorter of the electric guitarists is currently whirling around the studio as much as he can without fumbling over wires or banging into speakers, but it’s then Sapnap realizes what makes Quackity’s playing so entertaining, even in practice: He plays like he’s in front of an audience.

He had noticed it somewhat at the audition, but had figured the stage being there was what had encouraged the behavior. But between last week’s practice and now, he’s come to see it’s simply Quackity’s style.

Infectious on and off the stage, and from the moment his guitarist’s hands touch the instrument, he’s in front of a crowd, whether real or imagined. As Sapnap watches him perform, even for his audience of 0, he’s inspired to pick up his own pace, as he’s found before when performing with Quackity.

Because how could one not want to join in to whatever he’s imagining in his head, boosting his performance ten-fold and pushing charisma to the rim?

As they near the end of the song, and Sapnap realizes he’s spent most of his time observing Quackity, he realizes Karl has joined in on the backing vocals, taking after Quackity, and the sound reaches an even greater high as the rhythm guitarist finds the harmonies in the music between himself and Quackity.

It makes Sapnap grin as he’s once again cheek to cheek with Quackity, despite the fact that the lead had been given his own microphone. Of course, Sapnap doesn’t mind sharing his space with his energetic band member, and instead, playfully bullies him for the mic, desperately holding back laughter to keep his voice strong.

Dream catches sight of them shoving one another in the mirror and rolls his eyes teasingly, a smirk on his lips as he continues the lead vocal track as the song finally comes to a close, this time with Quackity letting Dream finish the song as it was originally written.

There's no time for celebration as the run through continues, 'James Dean', an original by the group, on the docket.

The song was chosen carefully by George to follow '1985', as it's easily one of their more upbeat originals of the ones they have fully written. It's a song layered with guitar lines that requires a talented and versatile lead, everything Quackity is.

The song goes incredibly well for a first run through as a group, and Sapnap notices Quackity's energy tone down as he focuses on getting through the piece.

And even though the energy falls short of the explosion that had been '1985' it still sounds incredibly good. It's clear both Quackity and Karl have practiced their parts, and Quackity respects Karl's learning curve by sticking rather religiously to the music he had been given.

Sapnap anticipates by the end of today, they'll have Karl confident enough to adjust to Quackity's tendency to ad-lib, and he knows George will only encourage taking his piece and spinning the melody further.

At the end, George takes a quick moment to jot down some things in his sheet music and allows Dream to grab a drink. Quackity repeats the chords from a verse he had struggled with, observing the music closely as his fingers move rapidly across the strings.

As George finishes annotating his music, Quackity seems satisfied with his quick runover and waits George's count-in to 'American Idiot', the 3rd song on their set so far.

Since they've done this piece as a group, there won't be much to practice afterwards, and it sounds as fluid and wonderful as it did in the previous week.

Quackity's energy is back up as the song switches to something familiar to them all, and as they plunge towards the chorus, he takes his liberties once more.

Karl keeps perfect measure and allows himself to join Quackity in 'performing' the song as opposed to just playing it. Sapnap and Dream join them too, and in comparison to the previous playthrough of the song, this one somehow holds more energy.

Maybe it's the way Karl has taken to ad-libbing some vocals and hyping Dream up as he sings, or the way George has begun to add in his own flair to his usually strict drumming. Whatever the reason, the song somehow evolves even from how it had been barely a week ago, and Sapnap is living for it.

The song comes to a crisp close and they're onto 'Freaking Out' another original piece. Where the previous songs had held more loose energy, 'Freakin Out' is a darker toned song that George had sandwiched in the middle as a dramatic point.

Again, the song is lacking the same energy as its predecessors, but it doesn't sound bad. They take their time pushing through the piece, Dream's vocals being the highlight as one of the 3 practiced members and co-writers.

As it comes to a close, George is once again back to his sheet-music, but it's Karl's turn to repeat one of the segments he had had particular trouble with. His brows furrow as he scours the music and surprisingly, he turns to face George, a question on his tongue.

"Was this part originally written for a keyboard line?" He asks, and George's expression turns to one of surprise.

“Yes, actually. How did you know?” The drummer replies, and Karl nods as his suspicions are confirmed.

“I dunno, just the progression of the chords and placement on the measures. Seemed like it was roughly translated to fit a rhythm guitar and would just... sound better on keyboard.” He says with a shrug. George hums thoughtfully.

“Well, yeah, I had to rewrite it since we haven’t had a keyboardist in the group for... a while.” Karl grins at this statement.

“Well, it might be your lucky day, because if you still have the original notes somewhere, I just so happen to be a keyboardist.” The brunette says proudly, and Sapnap smiles wide as he chimes in, remembering what Karl had said at his audition.

“Oh, hell yeah, I remember you mentioning that!” He says, and Karl grins, making Sapnap’s heart tighten in his chest.

George seems to be at a bit of a loss for words before he surges behind his drums to rummage in his bag for another set of sheetmusic.

“If it’s not too much, here’s the original transcription.” George says, and Karl scans the lines nodding in time as he goes through them in his head.

“Yeah, for sure. I’ll work on this over the coming week and we can practice it next time. I’ll bring my keyboard.” Karl says, walking back to his position and tucking the music into his folder.

Sapnap watches George’s eyes widen in pleasant surprise, expression open and certainly the freest Sapnap has seen it in a studio setting since Him. It’s nice to see that expression return, but as soon as it’s there it’s gone, and he returns to his generally uninterested facade, picking up his drumsticks once more.

“Ok, not to crash the party, but what about rhythm guitar?” Quackity questions. George tilts his head thoughtfully as he takes some time to reply.

“Mm, we can just make sure Sapnap stays extra on beat and have you cover the areas where perhaps a rhythm guitar would be more noticeable. You’re good at ad-libbing though, so I doubt you’ll have too many problems.” George finally replies.

“So just no rhythm guitar?” Quackity says, and George nods,

“Basically, yeah. We’ll just fill in the gaps and the keyboard can add more depth and rhythm where the guitar used to be.” Quackity nods at this reply and grips his guitar again as George speaks once more.

“Alright, we’ll table working on that one today then. Onto ‘Panic Vertigo’.” He says, beginning the count in.

The rest of the run-through follows about the same pattern as the previous pieces, since the last 3 of the set are all original pieces being practiced for the first time as a group. They’re rough, but passable, and Sapnap is proud of Quackity and Karl for picking up as quickly as they have.

Their diligence is clear to everyone, even George, and there’s no doubt they’ll have near mastered the pieces by the end of the month. Or, at the very least, grasped them enough to get through a 40 minute set with minimal problems.

By the end of the half an hour it takes, brief breaks included, the group is more than ready to refine the pieces in the last hours of the session.

So, the group turn their focus to George as the drummer pulls out his heavily notated music and begins to pick apart their playing one measure at a time.

At the end of it all, the group is rightfully exhausted. Working under the harsh leadership of George is no easy feat, especially when he's pointing out every small detail of where you messed up.

The studio is quiet as the digital clock in the corner flicks to 6PM at long last, the only sounds in the small space being water bottles getting uncapped and gulped down into thirsty mouths, papers being rifled and put away, and the pleasant click of amps being turned off and cases being shut.

There's labored breathing after that, the physicality of performing and singing coming to claim them as they sit against guitar stands and quiet speakers.

"Well." Sappnap finally says breaking the silence. "We definitely sound a hell of a lot better." He finished, cracking a grin as a light pitter of laughter trickles around the studio.

"Damn George, you have quite the meticulous eye." Quackity adds on, and Karl giggles. George blows out a deep breath between his lips.

"Yes, well, without that 'meticulous eye' you all would be sounding like a 6th grade jazz band." That brings a far more lively chuckle out of everyone, and Sappnap finally manages to raise his head, to remove his headband and shake his head, running his fingers through the sticky locks. While perspiration mainly sits on his brow, the sweat from the earlier performances of '1985' and 'American Idiot' have dried to stiff peaks on some of the thinner strands of his hair, and Sappnap takes care to loose the strands gingerly, sighing contentedly as it falls in front of his face.

He pulls his hair back into a stubborn pony tail and tames his bangs with a small metal headband, pushing them out of his face.

"Well, I think we deserve ice cream." Sappnap says as he checks his warped reflection in the glossy shine of his electric guitar.

"Oh that sounds amazing." Karl calls from where he's sprawled on the hardwood of the floor by the door. Sappnap takes a moment to observe Karl in all his splayed limbs, sweater long forgotten and tossed haphazardly over a chair in the far corner.

His button up is a short sleeve one today, and it's hanging entirely loose over Karl's torso, no longer tucked into the pair of pale purple shorts he had worn today, and likely freed from Karl's exuberant movements throughout the practice session. He looks good even in this exhausted state, and Sappnap finds himself grinning stupidly before looking away.

He's not the only one though, because as he draws his gaze back, he notices Quackity's own enamoredment with the rhythm guitarist, and scoffs teasingly under his breath.

"I agree, I would kill for Alyssa's chocolate raspberry sunday right now." Dream comments, and Sappnap watches Quackity's eyes flick to Dream curiously.

"Who?" He asks, and George is the one to answer.

"Friend of ours. Owns an ice cream shop about a 10 minute drive from here, but so worth it." George says, and Sappnap watches his eyes glaze over as he likely thinks about the ice cream

flavors offered there.

“Ohh, I see. Well, I’m down.” Quackity amends, sliding his guitar case over his shoulders and standing up. He stretches and Sapnap watches his arms flex in the movements, before they’re returning to the shorter’s side far too soon for Sapnap’s liking.

Evidently he wasn’t so subtle, because Quackity is smirking in his direction by the time Sapnap shifts his gaze.

“Like what you see?” He teases and Sapnap scoffs, rolls his eyes, and stands up, grabbing his flannel from where he’d tossed it on the floor somewhere between ‘Panic Vertigo’ and ‘Way With Words’. He wraps it around his waist and adjusts his tank top to a comfortable position, shoving Quackity lightly on his way to the door.

“Whatever you wanna think.” He quips, neither confirming nor denying. Quackity just laughs.

The group make their way down to the parking lot, Dream sending the address of the ice cream shop to the group chat as they loiter out the front and converse for a bit. Quackity and Karl are essentially repeating what Sapnap had learned at their previous practice, though this time to a fresh audience, so Sapnap let’s himself zone out, scanning the lot for something to catch his eye as the conversation continues to flow.

He spies Quackity’s bike nearby and meanders over to the shining metal and leather seats, curious to see the lead guitarist’s ride up close. As he’s observing the bike, he notices the conversation dip briefly and Quackity comes to join him, standing next to his vehicle.

“Pretty, right?” The shorter asks, running a hand over the seat with a prideful grin. Sapnap nods, watching the sun glint off the exposed chrome and deep navy coloration present on the fenders.

“Yeah. She’s gorgeous. What model?” He asks, despite knowing shit about motorcycles, but curious nonetheless. It’s a stunning ride, and while he’d always wanted to get into bikes, he’d never had the motivation or time.

“Kawasaki Vulcan 500, customized by me with a gorgeous deep blue pearl paint and maintained also entirely by me.” Quackity replies, finger darting over the shiny paint of the body, and Sapnap whistles respectfully.

“Wow dude. You a mechanic or is it just for fun?” Sapnap asks, walking around the side to get a full 360 of the vehicle and admiring how clearly taken care of it is.

“Nah, just a guy too interested in motorcycles ‘s all. She’s my passion project, I’ve always wanted a Vulcan, and a buddy of mine didn’t have time for her anymore. Sold her to me hella discounted.” The shorter boasts as Sapnap finishes his onceover and returns to the front.

“Damn, you’ll have to give me a ride someday.” Sapnap says with a wink, switching his gaze back to Quackity. A soft summer breeze ripples through the lot as the lead guitarist smirks, reaching down to open some hidden hatch Sapnap hadn’t even noticed and pulling out a second helmet.

“Why not today, 4-String?” He asks, holding out a second, clearly less used, helmet. Sapnap’s heart spikes as he grins, running his tongue over his teeth and grabs the side of the helmet offered to him, gaze not breaking from Quackity’s.

“4-String?” Quackity shrugs, Sapnap laughs. “Alright. Guess I’m riding with you Hot Wheels.” He replies, and Quackity laughs, fully letting go of the helmet to let Sapnap hold it, and the younger desperately hopes the flush on Quackity’s cheeks isn’t a trick of the light.

“Hey, Sapnap! Let’s go!” Dream calls from where Karl has evidently departed from the group to his own vehicle, ready for the taste on ice cream on his tongue.

Sapnap turns to face them and raises the helmet in his hand, motioning at it while he informs them of his ride.

“I’m riding with Quackity!” He calls back, and he watches George hide a laugh as he turns towards Dream’s car.

“Oh shit! Nice dude, enjoy!” His friend replies before he’s following after George, and Sapnap turns back to find Quackity leaning against the Kawasaki in a way that’s way too attractive to be real. How is it that people who ride motorcycles are just automatically hotter? Sapnap thinks to himself as he raises his helmet to slide over his head, and pull the straps.

Evidently, his head is a bit bigger than whoever was wearing it last, because the strap gets caught on over his nose and refuses to slide down. Quackity chuckles as he stands up from beside the motorcycle and approaches Sapnap, holding his hands out.

“Here, put this on first, and lemme help you out.” He says handing Sapnap a leather jacket as the younger gives him the helmet. At his questioning gaze, Quackity motions towards himself where he’s donned a jacket too. “Protection. Wind can sting and in case of a crash, less likely to get skin abrasions n shit.” He says as Sapnap slides the jacket on. Quackity’s fingers deftly adjust the straps of the helmet, and instead of handing it back to Sapnap, he takes the liberty to slide the helmet overtop of his head too. “Scuse me.” He murmurs as his fingers gently push the strap down under Sapnap’s chin, flushed skin meeting equally flushed skin. Quackity’s fingers trace feather light around Sapnap’s neck as he pulls the strap into place and tightens it.

Sapnap isn’t aware he’s been holding his breath until Quackity removes his hand to knock against the helmet securely with a smile.

“There ya go. All snug and secure.” Sapnap only has the capacity to nod as Quackity slides his own helmet over his head and hooks a leg over his bike, straddling the seat as he motions for Sapnap to sit behind him.

Sapnap does, following his motions, and watches Quackity, eyes the only thing visible over the open visor.

“Alright, so your feet can rest here.” Quackity gently adjusts Sapnap’s legs to fit on the small footholds built into the bike, and Sapnap lets his legs fall into place as he finds the footing. “And your arms-” Sapnap lets his arms be tugged forward by Quackity until they’re wrapped securely around the shorter’s waist. “-can go right here.”

Sapnap hopes the helmet hides the way he knows his cheeks are flushing right now. “Alright 4-String.” Quackity reaches out to pull Sapnap’s visor down and then he’s turning forward once more, adjusting his own visor and fiddling with what appears to be a GPS before finally turning the engine on, and revving it once. “Hang on tight!”

Sapnap heeds his advice as Quackity rips out of the lot, gripping Quackity’s waist tightly and pressing his chest against the older’s back as wind begins to whip around them, stinging Sapnap’s hands deliciously as they wind through traffic.

It’s probably illegal, and definitely fast, the way they’re weaving through cars, but thrilling nonetheless as Quackity takes them around tight turns and pushes the speed limit as much as he can.

Sapnap lets himself relax into it, watching the scenery pass in a blur, and catching Quackity's gaze through the visor in his side mirror, grinning at it, and hoping the older can see.

Whether he does or not, Sapnap can't bring himself to mind as he tightens his grip through a particularly sharp turn, busy highways leading to open forest-lined ones.

"Oh shit we're on a backroad! You know what that means!" Sapnap hears Quackity call as they turn off the main road and onto the mainly deserted backroad, the only cars visible being Dream's and Karl's.

"No, what?" He calls back, hoping his voice carries against the wind. Evidently it does as Quackity revs the engine, his gaze sharpening in the reflection Sapnap's been observing most of the ride.

"ILLEGAL SHIT!" His driver calls as the bike speeds forward, forcing Sapnap to grip even tighter against Quackity's back, shoving his head into leather clad shoulders as his heart races at the new speed.

As he finally adjusts to the pace, he dares to look up, the first thing he sees being the stark white of Dream's car flash by, followed rather successively by the color-whirl of Karl's. He raises a middle finger back towards Dream, left arm gripping extra tightly at Quackity's waist as he does, and hoping they're not too quick that Dream'll miss it.

He whoops as they speed ahead, dares a glance to the speedometer between Quackity's arms, and laughs again as he watches the already too-high number climb even higher.

Quackity joins him as they tear down the path, twin voices raising to echo on tree-lined roads abandoned by all save for them.

And as they reach the merge back onto the main road, speed slowing to a more reasonable number, Sapnap finds himself missing the rush of incredibly illegal riding down empty roads, and hoping he'll get to do it again.

They pull into the parking lot outside of Alyssa's ice cream shop, and Quackity shoves the kickstand out from the side of the bike, Sapnap pre-emptively mourning the loss of Quackity's warmth against his chest as he removes his arms from the older's waist.

Quackity removes his helmet, shakes out his hair, and Sapnap motions somewhat helplessly at his own, the shorter setting his on the seat before gently taking off Sapnap's, fingers featherlight against heated skin once more.

"Well, we'll have to teach you how to get your own helmet off if you're gonna be riding with me." Quackity says as he tucks the helmet back in it's compartment, covering it with the leather jacket Sapnap hands back to him too.

"Huh?" Is all Sapnap can as the older clicks the buckles shut.

"I mean, unless this was a one-time thing." Quackity replies, and Sapnap's heart skips a beat at the implication.

"Hell no, I'll ride that thing as long as you'll let me." He replies, and as Quackity raises a brow suggestively at the joke, Sapnap flushes and shoves him, the shorter quickly bracing himself against his bike. "Get your head out of the fucking gutter, dude." He teases as Quackity cackles and Dream and Karl pull into the lot at long last.

"I look forward to riding with you again." Quackity says at last, and Sapnap holds his gaze,

grinning in the afternoon light as car doors slam shut and they head into the ice cream parlor.

Chapter End Notes

LET'S GO MOTORCYCLE RIDING WITH THE HOMIE

I hope y'all enjoyed this chapter, don't forget to check out my [twitter](#) for updates, special content, and a super cool community.

As always, please leave your kudos and comments, I reply to every comment, cause I love to see them!

Thank you for reading, as always, I'll see you next Sunday, and I hope you enjoyed!
-Cure

This Life I Have

Chapter Summary

Ice cream and band talk.

Chapter Notes

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY TO ALL THE FATHERS OUT THERE, and to everyone celebrating it too <3

Probably not one of my favorite chapters I've ever done, but hey, after the chonker of last time, I think it's fine lol.

Anyways, make sure to check out my [twitter](#) for memez and updates, I seriously love everyone over there, and we're almost at 100 followers, which is kinda epic.

Anyways, enjoy!

-

EDIT: I fixed the schedule for practices, hooooo shit I messed that up.
BETA'd once, probably again soon rip

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Alyssa greets them pleasantly, Sapnap welcoming the cold flush of AC as they enter, and George, evidently quite enthusiastic for some ice cream, taking the lead, scanning the menu, and ordering.

Dream follows suit, holding a pleasant conversation with Alyssa while Sapnap holds back, observing the flavors and specialties of the day.

“So, what do you recommend, hm?” Karl’s voice calls suddenly from beside him. Sapnap pauses in his perusing and turns to face the taller with a grin.

“Anything. I mean, I usually go for one of the specials ‘cause they change every time, but if you’re more vanilla, their vanilla bean flavor is to die for.” Sapnap says with a smirk, not attempting to hide the subtle innuendo. Karl giggles.

“Oh no, I’m *hardly* vanilla.” He replies, and it’s Sapnap’s turn to laugh at the juvenile humor.

“Kinky.” Quackity chimes in with a shit eating grin that sends Karl and Sapnap into another fit of laughter, Karl reaching out to shove Quackity with the force of his reaction. The shortest simply keeps his amused expression as the giggles continue.

“Are you guys gonna keep flirting or order?” George calls to them from the table he and Dream have claimed, evidently both with their orders already paid for.

“Says you.” Sapnap replies under his breath, Quackity and Karl snorting at it before they move up

to order beside him.

As he had said to Karl, Sapnap orders the special, a dish called “The Surfway Sundae”.

“Good choice.” Alyssa says with a smile as Sapnap watches her scoop a couple incredibly blue scoops of ice cream to begin the sundae.

By the end of it, Sapnap is presented with a bowl filled with 2 scoops of Blue Moon ice cream, paired with 2 scoops of honey lemon (an in-house original flavor), topped with a light sprinkling of graham crackers on the honey lemon side, and an adorable assortment of gummies, particularly shark and Swedish fish on the blue side.

“Oh holy shit Alyssa, it’s a little beach!” He says, and Alyssa grins as she hands him a spoon.

“Yup! And if you look carefully, there’s even a surfboard shape on the sand made from strawberry sauce. Or, well, attempted.” She says with a chuckle. Sapnap laughs as well, his mouth is watering just looking at it. Alyssa has always been one to create the most unique and intriguing handmade dishes, and this one doesn’t disappoint.

“Looks amazing, but uh-“ he says, because he’s come to the realization that 4 whole scoops of ice cream (plus toppings) is a lot for one person. “I don’t know how the hell I’m gonna eat all of this.”

Alyssa laughs again, and shoots him a finger gun before moving to attend to Quackity, who has evidently decided on what he wants.

“I’m sure you’ll figure it out.” She says as Quackity rattles off his order, leaving Sapnap behind with a mountain of ice cream and a terrible amount of uncertainty.

Sapnap just huffs fondly, though nervously, as he looks at the dish before him in all of it’s creative glory.

“Well, if you’re in the business of sharing, I was gonna order the same as you.” Karl pipes up from where he’s made his way beside Sapnap.

Sapnap looks up at the brunette, relieved he won’t have to eat the entire dish by himself. “Oh, yeah, no, that’s perfect.” He says with a smile. “Grab an extra spoon from the cup over there, and I’ll go grab us a seat.” The shorter replies and Karl smiles back at him happily, following his instructions as Sapnap slides into the booth next to Dream.

“Sup.” He greets, setting his sundae on the table as George eyes it, a single brow raising.

“Someone’s hungry.” He comments, taking a bite of his Peaches n’ Cream scoop. Sapnap rolls his eyes.

“I’m sharing with Karl. Besides, Dream’s sundae is just as massive.” He says, prodding at his friend’s shoulder and eyeing his Chocolate Raspberry Sundae where it’s sat, half eaten.

“It’s definitely not. Mine only had 3 scoops, yours has 4, plus gummies.” Dream chides, and Sapnap shoves him slightly, getting a small smirk from George and a wheeze from Dream.

Karl joins them next, sliding next to Sapnap and nudging his shoulder against the younger’s in greeting as he digs his spoon into the beach side.

The brunette gasps as he watches the white spoon take on a purple color as it comes in contact with the ice cream. “Holy honk, they’re color changing spoons!” He exclaims in wonderment,

observing the spoon. Sapnap laughs as Quackity slides in across from them, holding a cone piled with the Superman flavor.

“Holy shit, that’s so cool!” He comments, watching Karl’s spoon change as the temperature returns to normal, and then back to purple as he stabs it back into the sundae.

“What, you guys haven’t seen color changing spoons at an ice cream parlor before?” Sapnap asks, watching the two fawn over the utensil.

“No!” They answer in unison. Sapnap catches George smiling somewhat fondly at the pair, and smiles to himself as he scoops a delicate mouthful of ice cream into his mouth.

As the fascination with the spoon dies down, forgotten in favor of licking up swiftly melting ice cream, Sapnap lets himself enjoy the flavors of the ice cream and the background music playing in the parlor.

He and Karl engage in a battle of the spoons as they get near the end of their sundae, giggling as they steal scoops from one another and claim gummies as they fall to the bottom of the paper cup.

And as the ice cream dwindles, bellies satiated with crisp cream, the conversation shifts to a group affair, idly chatting about life and, eventually, circling back to the band.

“So, we’ve been thinking about messing with some of the settings on guitars for different songs-“ Dream starts, but is cut off by Quackity, who jolts in his seat with realization.

“Oh shit, wait! We’ve gotta discuss songs for the set.” Quackity says, and the group nods, varying sounds of agreement and relief circling from the booth at his memory. “Hang on, lemme pull up my list.”

“And me too.” Karl says, the pair pulling out their phones, and George opting to pull out his journal.

“Oh! That and we wanted to talk about planning some extra practices in these last two weeks leading up to Sunset.” Sapnap chimes in, another round of nods passing through the group.

“Ok, well, one thing at a time, we’ll start with songs.” Dream says and Sapnap nods.

“Sounds like a plan. What’s everyone got?” He asks, pulling out his own phone to take notes and reference his list too.

“Ok, so I’ve got some classics-“ Quackity starts, quickly overshoot by Karl chiming in,

“You said we could do ‘Check Yes, Juliet’-“ Their voices begin overlapping one another and Sapnap can’t keep up as song names are rattled off left and right, both guitarists clearly excited about the subject matter.

“And I don’t know if any of you guys know Copperpot but-“

“So along with that-“

“OK!” George finally butts in as Karl and Quackity’s suggestions start piling up, overwhelming Sapnap and evidently Dream too.

The table becomes quiet as George takes command. “Sapnap, write ‘Check Yes, Juliet’ down. Quackity: I’m not familiar with Copperpot, best to avoid that for now. Karl, what was your next

suggestion going to be?”

Sapnap complies as Quackity shuts his mouth and nods, Karl scanning his list before speaking up.

“Well, I was gonna say ‘I Want You To’ by Weezer.” He says.

“Oh, that’s a good one.” Dream says. “I love that song.” And Sapnap doesn’t miss the subtle glance thrown towards George before he returns it back to Karl.

“Ok, Q, do you know the lead line?” Sapnap asks, typing it out as George scribbles it in his notes.

“Yeah, I mean, who doesn’t know a Weezer song as iconic as that?” He quips back, and Sapnap chuckles as he adds that to the list.

“Ok, so, two more then?” Dream asks, and George nods.

“I’m going to suggest ‘In Too Deep’, Sum 41.” The brunette adds, and Sapnap nods.

“Ooo that’s good George.” But Quackity shakes his head.

“Never learned that one. I’ve been meaning to, I just haven’t yet.” He confesses, and George nods, scratching it out in his journal. Sapnap moves the text further down in his note.

“Ok, I mean, worst comes to worst, have you listened enough to improv your way through it?” Sapnap asks, and Quackity considers for a moment.

“Mm, probably.” He finally replies, and Sapnap nods.

“Alright, I’ll keep it as a maybe in case we can’t find anything else.” He decides, and creates a new category in his notes, titling it *MAYBE*.

“Could we do ‘Stacy’s Mom’?” Karl pipes up “That one’s iconic and is always a fun one to perform.”

“Oh yes! I fuckin’ love that song.” Quackity chimes in, grinning happily as he begins to sing the melody.

“It’s been ages since we’ve done that... but I think with a little review it should be good?” Dream replies, voice questioning as he looks at George. George nods tentatively before scribbling the title in his journal, Sapnap following suit.

“Ok, so that leaves one more to feel comfortable right?” Karl asks.

“Yup.” Sapnap responds with a smile, checking his notes to confirm.

“Well, what about ‘Gives You Hell’?” Dream suggests, swirling his spoon around in the empty bowl before him.

“All American Rejects, right?” Quackity confirms and Dream nods.

“The Rejects are always fun to do, and ‘Gives You Hell’ is a personal favorite of mine. If you know the lead guitar parts, I think it’d round out the set pretty well.” The blond says, and Quackity nods.

“Yeah, for sure. I know it, Karl?” He asks, and Sapnap looks to the brunette for his reply.

“Yeah! Plus we can have that cool part where everyone shouts the words, good for performance.” He says with a wink, and Sapnap chuckles.

“Alright! Well, that’s that. I think George’ll work on putting the set in an order that flows and we’ll message you guys that when we’ve got it.” Sapnap says, finalizing the notes, but holding his phone out. “Ok, last order of business: More frequent practices. I noticed we’re pretty close to Sunset already, and at our pace of once a week, that’s only 2 more practices. Definitely not enough to fine tune the original works and add in practice with the covers.”

There’s general noises of consensus as the table considers the turn around.

“I’m not sure when you guys are free, I know Dream and George and I all have weekends free. My work day during the week finishes up around 5PM, 1PM on Fridays, except on Thursday. I work long.” Sapnap explains to the group, Karl and Quackity nodding.

“I do freelance stuff, so timing’s not really an issue for me.” Dream says, and George hums in agreement.

“As do I.” The brunette says. “It’s mainly about what works for you guys.” He says in reference to Karl and Quackity.

“Ok, well I work at a music shop during the week and Saturday morning. Sunday’s are totally golden, and Friday’s are totally free.” Karl says, and Sapnap writes the days down.

“Do you guys have Google calendars? The three of us use one to organize our schedules.” Dream chimes in, and Karl nods.

“Yeah, I can download it. Can you add me to it?” Karl says, swiping on his phone as Dream pulls out his device.

“And me too.” Quackity chimes in.

“Yeah, I’ll add you guys. It has to be on PC.” George says, pulling his laptop from his briefcase, and rapidly typing as he logs in. “Can I have your emails?”

They tell George their emails, and George sends the invites, double checking a couple characters in Karl’s. “Alright, Karl, is it downloaded? Check your calendars, do you see them now? They should be visible.”

“All downloaded. And yes.” Karl replies.

“Yup, I see it too.” Quackity confirms, holding up his phone to show the bright colors flashing across his calendar.

“Feel free to add your work times.” Dream encourages, and Karl eagerly does so, fingers working across his screen rapidly. Quackity’s a bit more hesitant.

“I’ll, uh, do it later. For now though, Sundays are good. But in the evening, preferably. And I can... I can do Thursday and Friday afternoons, but not evenings.” He explains, and Sapnap notes how oddly on edge the lead guitarist is. He won’t pry now though, and instead notes that down in his phone.

“Ok, so looks like Sundays for sure- add that Dream- Same time as Saturday meets?” He’s met with nods and carries on. “Ok and then Friday afternoon? Maybe more like 1:30 to 3:30 as opposed to 3 to 6. Work for you Quackity?” The shorter nods with a smile.

“Can do!” He confirms, and Sapnap nods, making sure Dream enters in those dates too.

“Ok, so for the next two weeks, we’ll meet 3 times a week for 6 more practices before Sunset. I think that should be plenty.” Sapnap says with a smile, watching the calendar update as Dream adds in the extra meetings.

“Good.” George says from where he’s sat, laptop vanished as he scribbles back in his notebook.

“Well, with that, we’re good to go!” Sapnap says, and the group nods. “Now, not that I don’t enjoy hanging out with you guys, however, I would kill for a shower right now.” The group breaks out into varied laughter as they stand up and make their way over to the trash carrying their napkins and paper bowls.

They say their goodbyes to Alyssa on the way out, loitering in the parking lot a bit longer before making their way to their designated vehicles, Sapnap joining Dream and George begrudgingly as he stares at Quackity’s bike longingly.

“Hey, don’t worry 4-String, you’ll get to ride again.” Quackity says with a wink, and Sapnap snorts.

“I’d better.” He says, and Quackity laughs as he pulls on his helmet and leather jacket. Sapnap hadn’t taken the time to appreciate the leather curving around his body before, but he takes it in now, appreciating the way it fits around the guitarist’s form near perfectly.

“Leather is a good look for him.” Karl says softly from beside Sapnap and the younger laughs.

“Yeah. It is.” He says.

“See you guys tomorrow!” Quackity calls before he’s revving his engine and swerving out of the lot, leaving Karl and Sapnap to stare after him.

“Alright Casanova, didn’t you say you wanted to shower?” Dream calls from the driver’s seat, and Sapnap hides his blush as he turns back towards Dream.

“Yeah, yeah, I’m coming. See ya tomorrow, Karl.” He says with a grin, waving as he accepts his spot in the back of the Legacy.

“See ya!” He hears Karl call before the door is closed and Dream is backing out of the parking spot.

Satisfied with the day's work, Sapnap settles into the backseat and allows the indie music George has on take him home.

Chapter End Notes

Finito!

There we go guys, hope you enjoyed, once again, Happy Fathers Day!

I hope you enjoyed this update, don't forget to leave your kudos and comments (I reply to them all!) and I will see you guys next Sunday with another update!!

Don't forget to follow my [twitter](#), let's be moots!

See you guys soon,
Cure

Infinitely Ordinary

Chapter Summary

KarlNap Bonding in the form of watching the sun set

Chapter Notes

Welcome back everyone!

Real quick thank you to all the support, almost 3k hits, and 250 kudos! You guys are insane, I appreciate it so much.

This chapter includes the KarlNap fluff you ordered (good shit), so I hope you enjoy!

Make sure to check out my [twitter](#), we just 100 followers which is absolutely wild!!! I follow back anyone who's active, so maybe drop a follow for a cool community and quality shit-posting!

With that out of the way, enjoy the chapter!

-

BETA'd once, hopefully I don't screw it up as bad as I screwed up the schedule in last chapter... yikes.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Sunday's practice runs incredibly smooth, pieces coming together as they run the entire set from top to bottom. They're still waiting on practicing 'Freaking Out', allowing Karl a little longer than one day to digest the piece, but everything else flows together rather well, and nerves ease as the progress from even one day ago is present and potent.

By the end, everyone's feeling far more confident, and head home looking forward to Friday, Karl saying he'll definitely be ready to introduce the piano part by then, and wishing everyone well as he sets off in his Honda.

As the rest of the group depart, Sappnap takes the helm for driving, corralling Dream and George back into his Ford and starting the engine, driving them back to the apartment. The ride is relatively quiet, George having claimed shot gun and playing some softer, more nostalgic tunes through the aux.

He's leaned against the window, and as they pass under streetlights in the setting sun, Sappnap sighs.

"I think you're gonna have to tell them what happened at some point." He says, eyes darting across the road. George makes a non-committal sound in his throat, and shifts to face further away from Sappnap. "They kinda deserve the truth if they're gonna understand why you wanna win Sunset so

bad.”

Another grumble from George and Sapnap eyes him from his peripherals. “Look, if you’re not gonna tell them your side, I’m gonna tell them mine. Just letting you know.” It’s more a formality than anything, because Sapnap has every right to tell the story, technically, even if it had hit George harder.

Still, he feels like he owes George as much to let him know his plans. He doesn’t like keeping Quackity and Karl in the dark, especially as he knows tensions will rise, and Dream will crack down on practice, George following suit and crawling back into his cave. They deserve, at the very least, an explanation as to why, and no matter what George says, Sapnap will be giving them his side of it all as soon as he can.

“Whatever.” Is the only response he gets as he pulls onto their road, meeting Dream’s eyes in the rear-view mirror as he pulls into the parking garage. Dream has a sympathetic expression, shrugging lightly as Sapnap searches for their assigned spot, shifting to park and switching off the ignition.

George trails ahead of them, clearly done with the conversation and ready to get some food, leaving Sapnap next to Dream as they watch him head into their building.

“I’m not the asshole, right?” He checks, because sometimes, Dream is more perceptive than him. Dream hums, but shakes his head as he responds.

“No, it’s your story too. You just can’t tell George’s side, you know?” Dream replies, and Sapnap nods, walking towards the door inside. “But, I mean, I doubt you could do that anyway. Your perspective is your perspective. You were also affected. You can tell your story too, it’s not just about George.”

His reply is rational, makes sense, and eases Sapnap’s nerves as they trail up a couple flights of stairs and find their floor.

“I think sometimes you forget that you were there too.” Dream notes, and Sapnap turns to look at him, confused.

“What? I do not. Of course I know I was there.” He replies, and Dream throws up his arms in surrender at the younger’s accusatory tone.

“I just meant that... you accommodate for George so much, but you talk about the whole thing like you’re... like you were just George’s friend and not *also* in the band.” Sapnap lets the words fall, silent in the hallway as they find their apartment door. “He didn’t just leave George, you know. He left you- and me -too.”

It brings a pang to Sapnap’s heart he hadn’t expected as he turns away from Dream, opening the apartment door and letting himself in, holding it open for his friend to follow. “Yeah but... but I didn’t know him like George.” He says, and Dream sighs.

“That doesn’t mean he didn’t hurt you.” It’s all Dream says as he joins George in the kitchen, scouring the fridge for something to scramble into a dinner, and Sapnap stands in the foyer, letting Dream’s words wash over him.

It’s too much to think about right now though, when his stomach growls, and the words seem to hang too heavy in the air, hitting all the right marks, but being too far down the field for Sapnap to be able to tell.

He remains in the safety zone, ignoring the arrows in the bullseye as he joins his friends in the kitchen, filing everything else away for later as the sun sets and the apartment is swathed in nighttime.

-

The Feral Boys

Today 11:02 AM

Color Crush

Hey, is anyone free to run some stuff with me at the studio later today?

I wanna practice the keyboard line with some guitar if possible to make sure it sounds good

Vocals is good too

And Drums, but I rly wanna work with some sort of instrumentation

Surgery Successful: Drumstick Removed

I've got a couple clients to meet with today, and my car's broke, so I'm in the city all day until Dream or Sap can come pick me up. So as it works out, I wouldn't be able to work with you anyways.

Color Crush

No worries! Go get 'em George :D

Dweam

Sry, I can't make it either. I'm on grocery shopping duty and then I have to get George's car to the shop, and a whole other list of things to do

Chores today :(

Color Crush

All good! Quackity? Sap?

Uhhh, if u can hang tight until, like, 5:30, I can get there.

Work n shit, sry

Color Crush

No that's fine!

5:30 then? I can wait

Alright, then yeah, I'll see you then ;)

Color Crush

You too!

And hey, let me know if u guys need any help with transportation, my clunk-bucket's running, and I'd love to be able to help u :D

Dweam

Thx Karl, will keep in mind if I end up running late.

Surgery Successful: Drumstick Removed

^^^

Today 3:40 PM

Hot Wheels

Can't come. Sorry.

-

Sapnap is booking it out of work, bidding farewell to the other employees as he frantically changes

from bus-boy attire to something more casual, a loose white graphic tee with a panda on it and some black skinny jeans. He checks the time and curses aloud as he reads 5:24, changing faster and clocking out as swiftly as he's allowed to before he's tearing across the parking lot to his truck.

He had gotten out a little later than he had wanted, stuck dealing with a table of annoying and entitled adults, and shoots a frantic 'RUNNING LATE SRY' text to Karl as he pulls on his seatbelt and out of the parking lot. He checks his hair in the mirror as he takes the familiar roads to Manifold Studio, before parking and sprinting into the building, haphazardly pulling a wire headband over his hair to keep it pulled back and heaving as he spots Karl in the waiting room.

"Hey there Sap. Didn't realize your job outside of the band was being a track star." Karl teases as Sarnap catches his breath, the younger sparing a brief, huffed, and sardonic laugh as he rights his posture.

"Yeah well. I hate being late to shit. Sorry about that, had a table of dumbasses to wait." He takes one last deep inhale before setting a smile on his face. "We've got to get you and Quackity a key so you don't have to wait for someone to show up to let you in."

Karl giggles as Sarnap leads the way towards the elevator, pressing the floor number and settling back into the enclosed space.

"I see. So you wait in your free-time? What restaurant?" Karl asks, fiddling with a loose bit of denim on his jeans. He's wearing a different, equally handpainted, pair today, and Sarnap scans the paint impressed for a moment before replying.

"Oh, uh, Kinoko Kingdom, if you know the place." He replies, and Karl perks up.

"Who doesn't? That's a fancy honking restaurant. Do you get an employee discount? Maybe I'll have to stop by." Karl says with a wink, and Sarnap grins.

"Karl, I'd treat you to a Kinoko dinner any day, employee discount or not." The shorter replies, sending Karl giggling again and flushing in the warm lights of the elevator. It dings as they reach their floor and together, they step out.

"It's right around the corner from the music shop I'm at, Tune Back Time." Karl explains, and Sarnap's eyes spark in recognition.

"Oh hey, I've heard good things about that place. I haven't been yet though, my friend Bad owns a music shop of his own where I get most of my supplies from. Muffin Music, if you've heard of it." And Karl nods.

"Yeah, yeah, gone there for a couple things Time doesn't have." The brunette says as they reach the studio door, Sarnap turning the key and opening it for Karl as the pair walk in.

"Neat! Yeah, Bad's our creative director, really. Awesome dude. You can hook in to any speaker you want, do you want me to do lead or stick with bass? Since we're working on 'Freaking Out' I know both." Sarnap says, approaching where his guitars are kept on the opposite side of where Karl is setting up.

"Uh, can you start with bass, and then if I'm feeling confident with it, could you switch to lead?" Karl asks, running his fingers across the keys and testing volume and settings. Sarnap listens to him run octaves and notes, figuring out the right key and tone as well as switching the setting to something a little more lilting tone, almost a light wind instrument. "Ok, pretty sure this is the setting George wants, and it's what I've been practicing with, so."

Sapnap laughs as he plucks at his bass, tuning some strings ever so slightly. “Alright then, you want vocals? I’m no Dream, but I can butcher my way through the lyrics.” He offers, plucking at the bass’s notes with a brief improv line to warm up.

“Uh, yeah, yes please.” He says, and Sapnap nods, setting up a mic near him too.

He looks to Karl, watches the older’s eyes dart across sheet music and test out fingers across pale white keys. “Whenever you’re ready.” Sapnap says, and his tone comes off a little more sappy than he intended. Karl’s head shoots up, evidently startled from being so focused, but settles into a loose smile shortly after.

“Oh yeah, give me... one more second here...” He flips through the pages again, reviewing something before he flips back to the first page. “Ok, I’ll follow your lead.” The brunette says, and Sapnap nods.

“Alright. 1, 2, 3, 4!” Sapnap plays the bass notes present in the beginning before Karl joins in around measure 8, plucking at the notes on the keyboard. Together, both melodies are simple, and the song feels entirely unfinished, begging for a strong lead guitar line and crying for drums that neither can provide as they push through the piece, Sapnap’s vocals gritty but strong in the small room of the studio.

Karl is on point with his keyboard line though, even though it is rather simple, but he’s nailing the timing despite the lack of instruments, and as they head into the section where the piano line switches from being in the wind-instrument setting, Karl is only a few beats behind as he switches to a grand piano.

For a first run through with someone else, where a switch is required from one setting to another, Karl is doing really well. Sapnap keeps the vocals strong as the song comes to a close, and Karl and him run the lead out, song ending and Karl scribbling things down in his music, not unlike George.

Sapnap huffs fondly as he watches him work, hunched over his keyboard before he’s back up, and facing Sapnap

“Ok, can you do lead this time? Everything else the same and hey-” Karl pauses, smiling at Sapnap. “You’ve got a great voice.”

The comment is so genuine, so out of the blue, that Sapnap blushes and places a hand on the back of his neck. “Oh, thanks, Jacobs. Your keyboard line is really coming together.” He compliments in return, Karl grinning back as he flips back to the beginning of the music.

Sapnap switches to his Stratocaster as Karl continues reviewing, practicing the switch, and giving Sapnap plenty of time to tune and warm up. He runs some riffs and refamilizes himself with the song, getting back into the groove of the electric guitar.

It comes back fairly easily, muscle memory ingrained in his fingers from several times working on it with George, and figures he has a decent enough grasp of the piece to get Karl through it.

“Ready when you are.” He says once more after he takes a brief sip of water and turns back to the mic.

“Alright, from the top!” Karl replies, and Sapnap grins, beginning the countdown once more.

This time, the switch is a lot smoother, and the sound is more full as Sapnap plays both lead and sings. It’s still missing the necessary drums in the background, but sounds a lot more put together.

By the end, Karl seems far more confident, and they prepare for another run-through to fully work out any other kinks.

They're in the studio for about an hour and a half more before Karl calls it, turning off his keyboard with a flourish and smiling at the progress he's made.

"Phew! Glad I got through that, thank you so much Sapnap." He says, facing Sapnap with a smile that sends the younger's heart reeling.

"Hey, no problem man, you're sounding hella good." He replies, and Karl grins as he unplugs and packs up his guitar.

"Ok, look, I've starved, so if you're down, would you wanna grab some greasy, definitely bad for you food and watch the sunset? I know a place with a view that's to die for." Karl says, zipping his case and Sapnap short-circuits at the suggestion.

Was this a date? Would it count as one? Watching the sunset is pretty romantic but he didn't want to read this wrong. He contemplates a witty reply 'Are you asking me on a date, Jacobs?', but the words don't come out as Sapnap thinks of the possibilities.

He's confident, sure, but if things were to go south, and Karl were to react badly, or brush it off, Sapnap isn't sure he could handle it. Or that the band could. They needed Karl, and George would never forgive Sapnap if he messed it up because of something as simple as attraction.

So he settles for a nod in Karl's direction as he sets his guitars in their cases, and flicks off amps and speakers. "Yeah, sure. I would kill for some fries right now." Sapnap says, pointedly ignoring the bit about the sunset.

"Cool! I can drive." The brunette offers, but Sapnap interjects.

"Well, I've got a truck we could tailgate off of while we watch the sunset. Might be better? You're more than welcome to drive her, since I don't know the location." He offers, dangling out his keychain for Karl to take if he wants.

Karl looks at the keys before grabbing them, running his hands over the keychains Sapnap has secured there. "Alright Sapnap, I've always wanted to drive a truck." He comments, making his way to the door, keyboard over his shoulder as Sapnap follows suit.

"I'll drive you back here so you can grab your Honda before the nights out, don't worry." Sapnap assures as he momentarily takes the keys back from Karl to lock the studio door. "After you." He says as the elevator doors pitch open in front of them and they make their way down to the parking lot.

They end up pulling through a McDonalds drive through, ordering some nuggets and Big Mac meals, as well as some McFlurries before Karl's pulling out and around, paying before Sapnap can get a chance to offer his card, and taking off in the direction of their next destination.

"All I'm saying is next time I'm paying, idiot." Sapnap says sulkily, spooning some oreo McFlurry into his mouth as Karl giggles, turning onto the road. "Hey, can we get the windows down?" He asks, and Karl takes a moment before he's located the button and sends the windows of the truck down in tandem, wind rushing into the car as they do.

Sapnap brings up a playlist, hooking into the aux for his truck and lets the upbeat tunes of his 'Driving' list accompany them as Karl dips through roads and lights before finally easing onto a backroad.

Sapnap recognizes the road as the one he had sped down on the back of Quackity's bike, the one necessary to get to Alyssa's ice cream shop, and let's Karl take the lead, turning up the speakers as 'Sk8ter Boi' begins to play over them.

"Lets go, I fuckin' LOVE this song!" He says as he begins singing the intro, Karl giggling but nodding in time with the music as wind pulls at their hair, rushing through the car.

"HE WAS A BOY, SHE WAS A GIRL, CAN I MAKE IT ANNNYMORE OBBBVIOUS!" He shouts, Karl eventually joining in as they pass down the road, sunlight fading but still hanging on the tops of the trees.

He lets the euphoria of the moment seep into his bones, the feeling only good music, good company, and a good goddamn car ride can provide as Karl takes the first turn Sapnap doesn't recognize, leading onto a road without a yellow line, music still blasting.

As they turn a corner, the chorus comes on, Sapnap and Karl practically screaming the lyrics as they play through the speakers of the otherwise quiet road.

"HE WAS A SK8TER BOY, SHE SAID SEE YA LATER BOY, HE WASN'T GOOD ENOUGH FOR HEEER!" They holler as the road spans on ahead of them, and as the bridge of the song plays, Sapnap whoops out the window, Karl laughing from where he's driving, eyes staying focused on the road, but bopping happily to the song from his seat.

The song ends, and Sapnap settles back in, letting the next song play, but continuing to jam out as Karl pulls into an unmarked road, driving a little more carefully as he takes Sapnap's truck up an unpaved section.

"I should've mentioned it was off-road, sorry." Karl calls over the music, and Sapnap waves him off easily.

"Relax, Jacobs, this girl's a four wheel drive, she's *built* for this, do what you need to do." He says, humming along with the music as Karl pulls into a clearing, shifting the truck in reverse to set the rear end in the direction of the overlook.

The music fades out just in time, the truck turned off but a moment later as Karl gets out, Sapnap following after and carrying the food with him, setting up the tailgate in the back before allowing himself to take in the view.

"Oh holy shit." He breathes as he overlooks the cliff Karl's guided them too, truck a suitable distance away and sun beginning to sink beautifully behind the ridge of trees in the distance. Karl saddles up next to him, grabbing a fry out of the container Sapnap is holding and popping onto the bed of the truck.

"That's what I'm saying." Karl replies, patting the space of bed next to him and encouraging the younger to join him. He does, settling on the opposite side of the truck bed and leaning against the side panel as he grabs his Big Mac.

"How the hell did you find this place?" He asks, eyes trained on the treeline as the sun sinks lower, shades of orange and yellow trailing across the sky in a delicate beauty. Karl shrugs, dunking a McNugget in some sweet chili sauce before replying.

"Just kinda stumbled across it. I'm pretty sure only a couple people actually know of it, which means the town teens can't turn this into some makeout spot." Karl says with a smirk. "It's just a nice space for people to come and watch and enjoy one of nature's most beautiful events."

Sapnap nods, and reaches to steal a nugget and some sauce from Karl. The older lets him, and Sapnap settles back in to watch the view once more, letting the sounds of nature be their chorus as fast food is consumed and a gentle, comfortable silence stretches between the two of them.

The sunset is stunning as it finally dips below the trees, shining briefly through the leaves before disappearing entirely, leaving behind streaks of gold and fiery red, a navy sky forcing down the dizzying array of colors in favor of a monochrome midnight.

Food is finished, and conversation is had as the chill of night creeps around them, still palatable from the heat of the day, and crickets and cicadas replace birds and bugs.

Sapnap sighs as he lays back across the bed, eyeing Karl, who's still leaned against the side, moonlight painting his face in delicate shades of silver.

He looks gorgeous like this, more than usual, and Sapnap finds himself mourning the fact that this isn't a date. What he wouldn't give for it to be one, he muses as he scans the stars in the sky.

"Wait, stay there, I'm gonna take a picture." He hears Karl say, and he hums in acknowledgement, staying still as Karl pulls out his phone and takes a photo. The older giggles, and leans forward to show Sapnap the photo, the shorter forcing himself to sit up to view the picture. "You look good. Peaceful."

The photo is grainy, in the way that photos taken on an iPhone at night are, but still clearly features Sapnap lying placidly and gazing up at the stars. It's peaceful, and Sapnap looks monstruck and innocent, eyes wide, and in a way, he supposes he really is.

"Send that to me, Jacobs, I do look good." He muses, and Karl huffs a brief laugh as he settles back against the side of the truck

"You got it, Sap." He replies, and the two lay back to enjoy the remainder of their time.

At the end of the night, he leaves Karl in the parking lot back at the studio, heading home with a new appreciation for the darkness and the silver light of the moon.

Chapter End Notes

Heehee.

Oh yeah, it's all coming together. From what I've got planned, it looks like we'll have around 15 chapters and an epilogue, so basically, this fic will be ending around late August. But, that means we had a summer fic for a summer mood ooooo, fun!

Anyways, y'all know the drill, new chapter out next Sunday, see you then!

For now, leave you kudos and comments (I reply to them all, and they really make my day!!)

Make sure to check out [twitter](#) as well, I swear I'm funny, see you there!

A brief shoutout to my moots over on twitter, and the Gang (y'all know who you are lmao) for being amazing. Just wanted to say that, it's entirely unrelated.

And with that, goodbye!

-Cure

I Want My Life Back Now

Chapter Summary

Practice and the Past.

Chapter Notes

And we're back!

Happy Fourth, for all of my American readers, eagles, fireworks, beer, or smth, yay
party popper goes off

For now, we can relish in some content! Enjoy this chapter! I've got the dnf crumbs you ordered AND the karlnapity bonding. PLUS there's a lore special!

Anyways, make sure to check out my [twitter](#) and

wh- what's this?

A playlist??? Yes indeed, I've caved and got a [Spotify Playlist](#) for you guys.

Enjoy!

-

BETA'd once, please god help me aH

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Sapnap is, thankfully, not nearly as late as he was to practice with Karl, and rolls up to the studio on Friday after work barely changed into a loose black tank and jeans, for once, being the latest as he notes even Quackity plugging in his guitar.

“Aw shit, Quackity beat me to practice, damn.” He gripes, and Karl giggles as Quackity turns to scoff at him, George also glaring from behind his drum set.

“Oh, so I’m still the problem, huh?” The shorter teases lightly, and Sapnap nudges his shoulder against Quackity as he plugs in his bass next to him, running his fingers loosely along the chords before responding.

“Nothing personal, Hot Wheels.” He says, tuning briefly by ear before flashing a quick smile at the lead guitarist. He’s met with an unimpressed look before George interrupts.

“Whatever, you’re all here now, we’ve got a keyboard to mix into ‘Freaking Out’, a full set to run, and 5 practices left before Sunset Band Fever.” The drummer calls from behind, picking up his drumsticks to twirl them briefly before hitting a snare to redirect attention. “We’ll take it from the top.”

The covers come together far more nicely, and so do the original songs, clear practice and effort

over the course of almost a week clear in smooth melodies and crisp rhythms.

They're at a point where Quackity has begun to experiment with the chords, not quite perfectly, often overlapping or accidentally leaving Karl behind, getting ahead of the beat or being dissonant with Dream, but enough to learn the patterns of the others.

Besides just the music though, Sapnap notices the group melding too, George learning Quackity's unconscious cues for when he speeds up, and Dream listening to Karl for chord reminders and variances.

Sapnap himself has been learning to mix better with Karl, as they're both rather foundational guitarists, building chords and keeping rhythm with George, as well as supporting Quackity and filling the music.

He's beginning to figure out Quackity's style, his favorite chords to incorporate into impromptu solos, as well as his typical progressions (no matter how variable they are sometimes). He's learned that when Karl is given a chance, he can really whale on his Les Pauls, and he makes note to bring up giving Karl more opportunities for solos.

On the other hand, he's relearning Dream under the context of coming alive once more. It's been a while since he's seen Dream this invigorated by music, and as such, he's taking more liberties. It becomes an intriguing game of dominance between Dream and Quackity for charisma and attention, ebbing and flowing as they learn when to give and take.

Often, Quackity comes off more dominant, Dream naturally more submissive until he knows people better, shy until he opens up. But as time has progressed, Sapnap has watched him regain the swagger and confidence of the old days, when lead guitarists didn't change like the tides of the ocean and rhythm guitarists were as consistent as the sea was deep.

It's nice.

And in the same breath that Dream has opened up, blooming and coming out from his cave, so has George, tentatively behind, and more so poking his head out than anything, but Sapnap, ever cognizant of his friend's tendencies, has noticed.

In the way of brutal telling offs softened to gentle reminders. Where biting words have turned to teasing jabs. Through the drummer's glimmering eyes as he watches Quackity play. Or the thankfulness for Karl's quick mind and adaptability.

Sapnap notes it all, and as the new members learn the ropes, the old ones grow, learning together as songs fall into perfect place and stunning rhythm.

It's rewarding to see, and as another long practice comes to a close, and George makes his way to Karl to discuss his keyboard, Dream falls back to chat with Sapnap and Quackity.

"Man, we're starting to sound good." Dream notes, and Quackity scoffs, swiping water from his upper lip from where he'd just been drinking from his bottle.

"We've always sounded good, now we're starting to sound great" He says with a grin, and Sapnap smiles back, high-fiving the shorter as Dream chuckles.

"Alright, fair enough. You're picking up on the original stuff pretty quick. I'd just work on the pre-chorus of 'Panic Vertigo', you're trying to add in a lot of improv, and it's overlapping a bit strangely. I'd save that more chaotic feel for the second half of the bridge so you can capitalize on the chaos of 'panic' so to say." Dream says in careful critique that Quackity meets with thoughtful

nods. Sapnap watches him lean back to grab his music from the stand where he's set it up (though barely uses anymore), rifling through until he finds the sheet music for the song and making a brief note in it.

"Gotcha. Yeah, I was worried I was coming on too strong, but I really wanted to bring in some of those feelings of just... confusion and frustration with some wacky chords." Quackity replies back after pencilling in the notes. "I just... didn't know where to fit that in. But I think I like the second half of the bridge"

Dream nods and points at the music in Quackity's hands "Yeah, it'll definitely bring that feeling into it. I get what you're going for." Quackity grins as Dream goes to take another swig of water and Sapnap leans back, resting his arm on his guitar with a satisfied smile.

"Look at lil' Dreamy giving good advice." He teases fondly, Dream scoffing around the neck of the water bottle and rolling his eyes. Quackity cackles from beside him and Dream brings the bottle away from his mouth.

"I always give good advice, you just never listen to me." His friend quips back, and Sapnap averts his gaze, waving it off with his hand.

"Yeah, yeah, sure, whatever." He says, and silence, save for the conversation George and Karl are having, fills the studio as they begin packing up.

It's nice, Sapnap thinks, to be able to have silences that aren't awkward exchanges of glances, or quiet far too loud. These are nice silences, the kind that comes after hard work and exhaustion, and not from nerves or fear. The ones only possible in good company, and Sapnap finds himself thanking the universe once more for whatever brought them all together like this.

As Karl and George finally finish up, tucking keyboards into cases and drumsticks into bags, the group make their way down to the parking lot, standing in their typical huddle as they converse before they part.

It's become somewhat of a habit after practices, to chat in the summer sun, today's earlier, and slightly more hot from the afternoon and heat of the day, but it's cut far shorter as Quackity eventually parts after a quick glance at his watch.

They bid him farewell and head on their own ways shortly after, ready to relax and rejuvenate before tomorrow's practice.

-

The next practice yields about the same results, ever so slightly more fine tuned and together, and certainly more fluid, but sticky nonetheless.

After all, too much progress can't be made in one day.

Sapnap smiles when Quackity redirects his wild solo to the second half of the bridge like Dream had suggested, and doesn't miss his best-friend's own satisfied grin as he sings.

By the end, they're tired once more, but instead of the quick departure from Friday, they take their time in the evening sun, simply enjoying one another's company as the sun sets further.

It's Karl who eventually suggests a redirection, offering to the group to join him at the overlook he had taken Sapnap to on Tuesday. Of course, the bassist eagerly agrees, and Quackity isn't far behind, eager to see the view and spend some time with the others.

But Sapnap watches hesitation form in Dream and George's eyes and knows they won't be joining them. He wonders if something had put them off from it, if they were creeping carefully back to safety, and why.

"We'd really like to, I think, but uh," Sapnap watches George look helplessly at Dream who sighs.

"George and I were planning on grabbing dinner out somewhere." Sapnap's eyes flick between the two, curious, before he grins wolfishly at them,

"No chance one of you grew a pair and asked the other out." He says, and Dream and George flush matching shades of crimson as Dream begins to deny frantically, George as well, though sounding more cynical than anything.

"Look, ok, so, no I'm not- he's not... we're not"

"No, we're not"

"Look it's like... it's- it's like-"

"He owes me from when I covered a coding client of his he didn't want to do"

"And I'm not- we're not going on a date ok, so, like-"

"Alright, alright, fine, not a date, yet whatever, I've been wanting some quality time with these two anyways, go on, have your little payback dinner. Whatever." Sapnap eventually says, saving Dream from sputtering excuses any further, and saving George from having to sulk while explaining. "Add it on the calendar next time." He notes briefly, and George scoffs.

"We didn't add it because we knew you'd do this." The brunette replies shortly, and Sapnap snorts.

"Freedom of speech, dudes." He makes his way to wrap an arm around Karl and Quackity's shoulders, standing in between them as he waves off Dream and George.

The two finally return to a normal shade of peach, only Dream's eartips betraying him in the faded light as they walk towards his Subaru.

"Use protection!" Quackity calls out jovially, sending Karl and Sapnap into a fit of laughter as George redirects Dream, who had turned to retort against the lead's jab.

"Too easy, holy shit." Sapnap says with a grin as they finally walk out of ear shot, and Karl snorts from beside him.

"So are they actually, like, not together?" Quackity asks, and Sapnap sighs.

"It's complicated. They're not by all technicalities, but if I have to walk into the kitchen to grab a bagel and be assaulted by them being domestic 'n shit one more time, I'm going to ask out George for Dream. Or vice versa." Sapnap explains, and Quackity laughs sharply as he finishes.

"Damn, I totally thought they had, like, the 'established couple' thing going for them." He says, and Sapnap just nods.

"Same, honestly." Karl pipes in.

"Yeah, well, they basically do. If only living by yourself was cost efficient." He gripes.

"Alas, it's not." Karl replies with a grin.

“Says the one in his mom’s basement.” Sapnap quips back, and Karl giggles.

“Funny how I’m actually living with my mom *because* it’s not cost efficient to live by yourself. Crazy how you just brought that up.” And this time, it’s Sapnap’s turn to laugh. “Anyways, we’re losing daylight. Sap, Q, you two wanna just hop in the car with me? Saves us time and helps the environment.”

“Yeah, I’ve got no problem with that.” Sapnap agrees, Quackity nodding as well, though, a little reservedly, Sapnap notes.

Come to think of it, he’d been quiet throughout the entire conversation a second ago. Sapnap notes to possibly bring that up, along with the reluctance for his schedule from last week.

For now, he claps Quackity comfrotingly on the back, watches the older right his posture and push a smile onto his face, and begins to follow Karl as the brunette darts off to his car, unlocking it with his keys and opening the passenger door.

“Shotgun!” Quackity calls before Sapnap can slip in, and he shoves the shortest into the seat, closing the door behind him as Karl wings around to the driver’s side and Sapnap accepts his fate as he slides into the back.

“Bitch.” He says lightheartedly as Quackity cackles from the front, seemingly back to his genial personality, and Karl turns on the Honda.

The drive is pleasant, Karl’s phone connected to the aux as his playlist filters through the vehicle, and in comparison to the wildness of their ride on Tuesday, this one holds a bit more intimacy as softer songs flow around the trio and through idle chatter.

The roads are familiar as they curve through the woods, finally pulling off onto the overlook just in time as the sun begins its gentle descent, the three piling onto the hood of the car, leaning into one another as music still plays from the open doors behind them and the creatures of the night begin to sing.

In comparison to the careful and soft silence of Tuesday, this time as the sun sets, it’s offset with boisterous laughs as Quackity entertains them, struggling to stay balanced on the small hood and gripping at clothes as they begin to slip, barely keeping themselves in place.

It’s more sloppy, messy, and carefree, and as the stars finally overtake, he’s too busy looking into Quackity’s eyes as they sparkle, too caught up in Karl’s careful arm around his neck and the smell of his shampoo to focus on the beauty of the night.

Quackity’s finishing up some story about him and some friends from high school when Karl speaks again, cutting through the conversation easily.

“Ok, ok, sorry to totally reroute this discussion, but I am *starved*. Anyone down for late night diner fries and milkshakes?” The brunette suggests, leaning his head against Sapnap’s shoulder as he meets Quackity’s eyes.

Right on cue, Sapnap’s stomach growls, and the other two giggle, Karl finally sliding off from the hood, and Sapnap mourning the loss of sweater clad arms as the brunette leans against the door.

“Come on boys, let’s grab some grub.” He says as the two slide off the hood and follow him to the car

“Can’t have Sappy Nappy getting hungwy.” Quackity teases as they pile in, and Sapnap scoffs and

shoves the older from behind as he clips his seatbelt.

“Shut up.” Karl just giggles as he turns the ignition and backs carefully out of the overlook, Sapnap watching his hand on the gear stick as he maneuvers out carefully.

They’re on the road fairly quick, and once again, the drive passes comfortably as road lights flash by and back roads lead back to civility, light pollution overtaking the careful quiet of the stars and moon from the overlook.

Karl pulls into the parking lot of a 24/7 diner boasting a bright neon sign reading ‘Captain’s Log’, warm lights and an overlit interior welcoming the trio in as they laugh about something Quackity’s said at the tail end of their conversation.

They slide into a booth as a waitress with poofy white hair walks over, smiling bright as she pulls some menus and presents them to the group.

“Hey there! Welcome to Captain’s Call, I’m Puffy, and I’ll be your waitress tonight. Can I getcha anything to drink?” The woman says, and the three quickly scan the menu, searching for the milkshake section, and then the options presented to them.

“Uh, yeah, can I get a Strawberry milkshake?” Karl eventually asks, and Puffy jots it down on her notepad, nodding along and making her hair bounce with her.

“Gotcha. And you?” She asks, turning to Quackity who begins his order, pointing to it on the menu as well.

“I’ll take the ‘Captain’s Log’” He says, and Sapnap scans over that on the menu noting it as the diner’s specialty milkshake. He debates switching his order to the speciality, but the cookies and cream sounds too good.

“Oo, good choice, I always recommend that one.” Puffy says with a grin, and Quackity smiles back easily, face illuminated beautifully in the pink flare of the neon surrounding them. “Alrighty, and you, sir?” Sapnap snaps himself back from admiring Quackity, clearing his throat and beginning his order.

“Uh, yeah, I’ll jsut do a cookies and cream shake, thank you.” He asks, and their waitress just nods again as she flips her book shut.

“Ok and cherries and whip for all?” They nod, and she smiles. “Alright, well, I’ll give you some time to think over our menu, and I’ll be back with your shakes in a bit! Lemme know if you need anything in the meantime.” She calls as the group waves her off, returning to scanning the menu.

“Do you guys just wanna share an order of fries- or they have a blooming onion!” Karl says, voice lilting as he mentions the fried onion.

“Oo, I could go for some deep fried onions. I think I’m just gonna stick to a classic cheeseburger too.” Quackity muses, eyes still scanning over the menu.

“I’m down. You think it’s too late for waffles?” Sapnap asks, eyeing the waffle meal on the dish, mouth watering at the thought of the hashbrown it comes with.

“It’s literally never too late for waffles, I was thinking of going with the pancakes anyways.” Karl replies with a wink, grinning at Sapnap. Sapnap feels himself flush as he smiles back, but shrugs.

“Alright, fair enough.” He says, and Quackity pouts from beside him as he sets his menu down.

“Man, now you guys are making me feel like I should get a breakfast food.” The shorter whines, and Sapnap and Karl laugh.

“Do whatever you want.” The brunette says with a shrug, leaning back and stretching against the booth.

“But if we can peer pressure you into eating breakfast foods at-” Sapnap checks his phone “almost 8pm, we’re gonna do it.” Quackity snorts but Sapnap watches his gaze flick to the breakfast section.

“Fuck it, I’m just gonna get waffles too.” Karl rolls his eyes from where he’s sat across from them, reaching out to gather their menus for ease of access for Puffy.

“I can’t believe I’m surrounded by waffle enthusiasts when pancakes are far superior.” He gripes, and Sapnap and Quackity share an amused look.

“Oh please, waffles are pancakes but *better*, sorry babe, that’s just the facts.” Sapnap says, and Karl raises a brow.

“What makes them any better than pancakes?” He retorts, and Sapnap shrugs.

“They just are. Why are pancakes better than waffles?” Quackity pipes in, and Karl giggles as he sets back against the booth, tucking their menus on the corner of the table.

“Fair enough. Oh look, here come our milkshakes!” Sure enough, Puffy is returning with a tray loaded high with milkshakes, and she sets down each one carefully.

“Ok, there you boys go! Are you ready to order, or do you need some more time?” She asks, but the three shake their heads.

“We’re good to go. You guys are still serving breakfast, right?” Quackity checks, and Sapnap watches their waitresses’ grin grow.

“Absolutely! I see we have some breakfast dinner enthusiasts, wonderful! What can I getcha?” She asks, pulling out her pen, and Karl starts their order.

“Well we’re gonna get a blooming onion to share, and I’m going to get some pancakes with hash brown as the side, the superior breakfast dish.” Puffy bobs her head and notes it down.

“It absolutely is, and for you two?” Sapnap rolls his eyes at Karl who simply staves off a giggle as Quackity begins to order.

“Yeah, we’re both gonna grab some waffles with hashbrowns on the side, the actual superior breakfast dish.” Sapnap and him high five as Puffy finishes jotting down their order.

“Alright, but I think we all know pancakes are definitely better.” Karl grins once more as Sapnap and Quackity laugh at their waitresses’ friendly and funny personality.

“Alright Puffy, sure, sure.” Sapnap says eventually, the waitress leaves with a grin after Karl extends his hand for a high-five she returns.

“At least our waitress knows what’s up.” Karl says, and the three just fall into laughter as the wait for their food begins.

Their food comes out rather quickly, barely 15 minutes later, and they thank Puffy as they begin to

dig in, appreciating the taste of the food and each other's company as oldies play softly in the background.

"You know, I'm really glad you guys joined the band." Sapnap says as he finishes up his waffles, a little while later, moving on to slice some of his hashbrown.

"Oh yeah?" Quackity says before shoving a piece of fried onion in his mouth.

"Yeah. You guys don't really see it, but Dream and George are *really* starting to warm up to you. I haven't seen Dream, or George for that matter, this animated since, well. Since our first lead left." Sapnap replies, mouth quirked down as he thinks on the ex band member.

"Mhm. Pardon me if this is overstepping but... can you tell us what happened? You guys keep mentioning this old lead guitarist, but like, what actually happened?" Karl says, and Sapnap sighs, finishing up his hashbrown.

"Yeah. Yeah, I'll tell you my side at least. You guys deserve to hear it." He muses softly. "It hit all of us a little differently, and definitely hit George the most, but I'll share my side. Maybe we can get George to share his later." Sapnap says with a shrug as Quackity and Karl switch their full attention to him.

"So, basically, it goes back to college. Dream and I were in our sophomore year and George was a Junior. Dream met George before me, but I've known Dream since childhood, so long story short, Dream had introduced me to George from a one off coding class he had taken.

I'd only just gotten to know George that year, and we started overlapping our classes since we were all doing loosely music based majors, or music adjacent, and at the end of the year, we were pretty damn close." Sapnap pauses to take a sip of his shake before continuing. "Anyways, I'd been trying to goad Dream and George into forming a band with me for ages, cause up until then, I was still a solo gig, a bit of a one-man show.

Dream and George are both pretty shy until you get to know them, and if one wasn't going to do it, there was no chance the other was. Enter Wilbur Soot." Quackity interrupts Sapnap before he can continue.

"Wait, Wilbur Soot. Like, the lead singer and songwriter of Sleepy Boys Inc Wilbur Soot?" He checks, and Sapnap nods. "What? He's, like, a local celebrity, and you *knew* him?"

Sapnap sighs and nods. "Yeah. I didn't just *know* him though, I played with him." Quackity's jaw drops, and Sapnap continues. "So, like I was saying. Wilbur. George introduced us to him one day during practice. He and Wilbur apparently had several music classes together, but most notably music theory. They were pretty close friends, and George wanted some feedback for his lyrics and songs, and figured Wilbur would get along with us since we were all musicians.

So, Wilbur starts tagging along to practice, and eventually, we all become friends, even hanging out outside of practice. He's the one who suggests we should make a band, offering to play lead so I could play bass, and gives us some songs to perform." Sapnap stops to smile briefly at the memory. "Of course, me having been trying to do this, for, like ever, agrees, and we start working on wearing George down since Wilbur is close to George, and if George did it, so would Dream.

Sure enough, George finally agrees, Dream follows suit, and bam, the Dream Team is formed. Wilbur and I even started teaming up to teach Dream electric guitar so he could be a rhythm guitarist for us, but when we performed, he still stayed as a vocalist, and didn't seem all that interested in guitar.

We start performing, booking gigs, and it's working really well! I mean, hell, Wilbur is fucking *talented*, and we started building a name for ourselves. Flash forward to Dream and I's summer before our senior year, we were finally gonna perform at Sunset Band Fever for the first time.

We were all so excited and then—" Sapnap inhales as he remembers what had happened, running his tongue over his teeth as he recalls. "And then a week before, Wilbur told us he didn't want to be a part of the band anymore."

Quackity's face falls, confused, Karl's similar, but neither saying anything as Sapnap continues. "He says he's really not a big fan of being in a band, that he'd really rather go solo, and he hates to do this to us so close to Sunset, but he's been thinking about it for a while."

"Damn." Quackity interjects. "That sucks." Sapnap nods, spreading his hands.

"Yeah, but, like, it's understandable. Whatever. Being in a band isn't for everyone." He replies, and Quackity hums, unconvinced.

"But then how did he get to being in Sleepy-" Karl starts, and Sapnap interrupts him gently.

"I'm getting there." The two quiet down again. "Anyways, we're frustrated, after all, we'd been so ready to perform at Sunset, but we can't keep him here, and like I said, understandable. Whatever. We end up pulling from Sunset, and we don't really hear from Wilbur again.

I think George kept in loose contact, but I'm not entirely sure. We'd look for updates every once and a while and never really got one.

A little later, we start to hear whispers of a new up and coming group called Sleepy Boys Inc. Apparently, they had an incredible lead vocalist and songwriter, an incredible drummer, and their guitarists were talented as all hell too. We don't look into it too much, instead focused on our own shit, but eventually, Sunset comes back around, and after an intensive amount of coaxing, I got Dream and George to try again this year, just us three. Me on lead guitar, George on drums of course, and we had Dream trying to do rhythm, but he was having difficulty with it.

Anyways, we show up to Sunset, and we finally see Sleepy Boys Inc perform, and who do we see is their incredible lead vocalist? Wilbur." Sapnap pauses again to take a break and swig of milkshake, letting the words sit unpleasantly in the cove of their booth.

"Oh." Karl says somewhat dejectedly. Sapnap swallows deeply.

"Yeah. So we're fucking pissed, George more than any of us, because Wilbur had lied to us, told us he preferred solo and he didn't like being in a band, but here he was, in a *band* and on stage.

We perform, and we perform hella well, mostly out of spite I'm sure, but we just cannot seem to beat them. We come second, but we vowed to come back better next year, and George starts pulling out all this music he's had written to perform instead of covers, and we start rebuilding.

New members, new songs, new positions, I'm back to bass, we abandon Dream learning guitar at all and focus on finding more members to fill out the band, but none of them are good enough.

They're scared away, held up to invisible standards George has crafted and, well, we barely get second the next year. More cycling, nothing fits, we're losing hope, and now, we've got you guys, and I think... I think we have a shot." He finally finishes, letting himself smile as he regards the two.

"That was... super shitty of Wilbur." Quackity says, frowning. Karl nods from across the way.

“Incredibly.” The brunette adds on. Sapnap just huffs out a sad laugh as he slurps the last of his milkshake and sticks some fried onion in his mouth.

“Damn, now *I* want to beat them more than ever.” Quackity exclaims, falling dramatically against the back of the booth. “Poor George, the fuck, I wonder if, like, he knew anything, or like, how close they were. Or how close he *thought* they were.” Sapnap shrugs.

“Couldn’t tell ya. That’s his side, I’ve said mine.” Quackity nods understandably.

“Well, don’t worry, we’re gonna make him regret that choice at Sunset, promise.” Karl says with a grin, and Quackity nods vehemently.

“Absolutely.” Sapnap just grins, flushed by the positivity and the fire in his friends’ eyes as they seem rather fueled by the story.

“And I think George and Dream can see that. Well, that you’re sticking around, at least until Sunset. You’ve definitely clicked better than anyone else we’ve had, at least with them. I’m pretty easy to get along with.” Sapnap says with a smile as they finish the last of the food and their drinks.

“Hey man, we’ll stick around as long as you’ll let us, at least I will.” Quackity states, resting a hand on Sapnap’s shoulder, warm palm meeting his bare skin in the oversaturated neons. “I like it here. You guys are *fun*.”

Karl nods, leaning across the table to be as close as he can without getting food on his clothes. “Me too! I mean, now that George isn’t just staring me down, his advice is actually really great and he knows a lot about music.” Sapnap chuckles. “He really helped with my keyboard line, especially for someone who’s never played!”

“And Dream with the guitar line!” Quackity chimes in, and Sapnap’s smile grows.

“That’s really great to hear. Thank you guys. A lot, really. It’s nice to see my friends come alive again.”

The three share gentle smiles, light curving across cheeks and dimples as they wait for their check, and Sapnap realizes he hopes these two never leave.

He’s not sure if he means the band or his life.

Chapter End Notes

Hope you guys enjoyed!!!

Was the lore interesting? There's some of the lore you get for the band, at least, Quackity may still have some mysteries up his sleeve, BUT, mmm you'll see ;)

Anyways, make sure to check out my [twitter](#), I promise I am Very hilarious and fun, and make sure to leave your kudos and comments! I reply to them all, and I LOVE seeing them, they make my day :D

Hope y'all enjoyed, Happy Fourth of July once more, and I will see you all next Sunday!

-Cure

Favorite Liar

Chapter Summary

As the group gear up for Sunset, some secrets become known.

Chapter Notes

Oh goddd, this chapter man. Took some effort to get through, but all's well that ends well and y'all get a chunky lil' chapter here.

Authors, this is your sign to power through you writer's block, it's worth it, I promise.

Fun Fact: The song this chapter is named after (Favorite Liar) is my favorite Wrecks song. 11111/10 reccomend!

Welcome back, make sure to check out my [twitter](#) if you haven't already, it's super cool over there!

Also, [PLAYLIST](#) PROMO AGAIN!

Anyways, with the annoying adverts out of the way, enjoy the story!

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BETA'd at least three times, extra thanks to my epic amigos, [Finn](#) and [Angel](#) who came in clutch to help edit when my block was kicking my butt real bad <3

Show them some love please, they deserve it!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Sunday's practice whips around the next day, forcing the five into more hours of grueling playing, but Sappnap can see the carnal shift in Karl and Quackity as they play. It's more voracious, like they're proving a point and fighting for all they're worth.

George had pulled him aside during a break between running their set, brown eyes meeting deep blue ones in a corner of the practice room as the others discussed the song they've just finished playing, letting Sappnap and George talk privately.

"You told them." It's all George says and Sappnap nods.

"Only my side. If you ever want, I think they'd love to hear more. They asked about what your relationship was like with Wilbur." He notes, and George's head tilts, gaze sharp and calculating.

"And?" He asks, and Sappnap exhales a sharp note of breath.

"I didn't go into details. Said you guys were close. Glossed over it. Didn't mention how close you actually were. Or that you continued to talk to him after he left. Or the whole..." Sappnap lets his sentence trail off, and George sighs as he studies the wall behind Sappnap.

“Ok.” A brief pause. “Thank you.” Sapnap nods, and as George backs up, he reaches out to rest a hand on his shoulder.

“They’re good guys. They won’t care.” He assures, and George snorts.

“Whatever.” Sapnap sighs, and looks away from George for a moment before returning his gaze back.

“We’ve got a good group, and I think they’re here to stay.” He says, the two turning their gazes back to the trio conversing in the main section of the studio.

“For better or for worse.” George retorts as Quackity laughs particularly loud at something, almost knocking over a microphone stand in the crossfire. Sapnap chuckles, and George’s lips curve into a wider grin as they watch the three goof around in the middle of the studio, letting the small space be filled with boisterous peals of laughter.

“We better get back before they hurt themselves.” Sapnap eventually decides, and George nods from next to him, adjusting his position to stand upright and begin walking back.

“Yeah, or our equipment. We aren’t rich.” The brunette scoffs, and Sapnap grins as they walk back, joining the trio and spending the rest of the break cracking jokes in the warm air of the studio.

-

6 o’clock rolls around, and the group pack up the studio eagerly, but before they can leave, Sapnap stops Quackity and Karl at the door.

“Before we head down to the parking lot... we’ve got something for you guys. Dream?” His friend nods before jogging back to where Sapnap’s Stratocaster lies on the side of the room, digging through the gig bag next to it before grabbing something and making his way back to the door.

Sapnap grabs the item, wrapping his hands around the objects and facing Quackity and Karl once more. “Hands out, eyes closed.” Karl and Quackity comply almost immediately, and their questionless trust makes Sapnap’s heart flutter.

He drops the items, two keys, one in each hand, letting his fingers run across the metal teeth before they fall into open palms. In Karl’s, a bright silver key with a small purple guitar pick holder attached. In it is a single pick, a custom one from Bad’s shop, yielding a bright amalgamation of melded purples, teals, oranges, and yellows.

And in Quackity’s, the other, polished silver with an attached navy blue pick holder, the pick held in this case a deep blue with bright yellow swirls, another custom Sapnap hopes the shorter will like.

“Alright, open up.” The two do, oohs and aahs filling the studio as they admire their gifts, eyes shimmering with appreciation at the keyrings and attached accessories.

“Where’s it to?” Karl asks, thumbing the pick and admiring the careful striations.

“Well, we figured it was about time you guys had your own keys to the studio. It’s open to you guys anytime, and now, you won’t have to ask one of us to get here first.” Sapnap explains, and Karl and Quackity grin.

“Shit, thanks man!” Quackity says, pulling Sapnap into a hug the younger reciprocates easily.

“Hey, don’t just thank me. Dream and George pitched in too, and those picks are from my buddy Bad’s shop, custom made.” Quackity huffs a fond noise of exasperation as Sarnap explains the custom nature of the picks before he’s pulling Dream and George into a hug, one after the other, and thanking them just as profusely.

Karl follows suit, and Sarnap watches happily as George awkwardly pats the guitarists on the back after receiving their thanks.

“Well, you guys deserve it. Great practice, we’re sounding awesome.” Dream comments with a smile, and Quackity nods.

“I can’t believe Sunset Band Fever starts this Saturday.” Karl says, and Sarnap whistles as the full gravity of the situation hits.

“Damn, well, I’d say we’re in pretty good shape. What song should we perform for the actual competition?” Quackity asks, and George decides to reply.

“We were thinking ‘Turn It Up’ would be good.” The brunette says, and Quackity nods. “It’s got good energy and showcases our talent. Plus, it’s a good hype song for getting the audience involved. We can use that to our advantage since it *is* partially decided by the audience.”

“Sounds like a plan. I’m down, we sound good playing ‘Turn It Up’ too. Is that why you were having us practice it extra the past two days?” Quackity asks as he pockets his keys and Dream makes to open the studio door.

“Yeah, I figured we should start gearing that up. I’ll have us focus more on it these next three practices, since we won’t be performing until next Wednesday. Speaking of, even though the festival has started, I expect you all to show up to our last three practices on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. They’ll be crucial for prepping for the actual Battle of the Bands.” George replies as the group make their way out of the door, locking up the studio behind them.

“We should totally plan a day to just go to Sunset as friends, so we can just enjoy it together.” Karl pipes in, and Quackity nods excitedly.

“We totally should!” He says as the elevator closes around them, beginning it’s descent.

“Well, usually what we do is attend the festival on the day of the battle, so we’re already at the venue and we can keep the stress sorta low.” Dream says, and Sarnap nods from beside him.

“Yeah. We get up early to prepare the instruments, and then head on down in the truck, spend the day enjoying the food and vendors, distracting ourselves from the impending doom of the performance, and then run out to pack up the van with the instruments about an hour or so before the actual competition is gonna start.” He says, stepping into the lobby, the 5 beginning the short walk to the parking lot.

“Sounds like a plan! I’ll clear Wednesday and hopefully get the day off from work.” Quackity says, and Karl nods beside him.

“Same! Man, I am so freakin’ hyped for this, I can’t believe it’s right around the corner!” The brunette says excitedly, and Sarnap grins.

“God, so am I. We’ll show the Sleepy Boys who’s boss, huh?” He says, and he’s met with exclamations of affirmation from the other 4.

“Sleepy Boys can fuckin’ SUCK it, after we *demolish* them on stage.” Quackity says, and even

George is grinning next to him, pleased with the confidence from their lead guitarist.

“Well, even if we don’t win, we’ve got a killer set to perform at a private venue. I’m sure Bad can hook us up with one.” Dream inserts, ever the realist, and Sapnap snorts.

“Yeah, he can, but we won’t *need* it, will we boys?” Enthusiastic ‘No!’s chorus from the group and Sapnap smirks, satisfied.

“Alright then. We’ll give ‘em hell.” The blond says happily.

There’s a short, comfortable silence that follows, broken at last by Karl after checking his phone, the brunette pulling out his keys and beginning to head off to his car.

“Sorry for the abrupt departure, but I’ve got to get home for pasta night a la Mom. But hey, I’ll see you guys this Friday!” Karl says as he makes his way towards his Honda, waving to the group as they wave back.

“Yeah, I should probably start heading out too, I picked up an extra shift at work this evening.” Quackity says, making his way over to his motorcycle, and the three left bid him farewell as they make their way to the side of the lot where their cars are parked.

Sapnap had driven from running some errands whereas Dream had driven George from their apartment, so as they stood in the lot, Sapnap making his way towards his truck, he had expected George to follow Dream.

So he’s surprised when George trails alongside him to the Ford parked a few spots down. He turns to regard his friend curiously, but doesn’t say anything until George is sat in the passenger seat next to him.

“Riding with me?” He asks, foot pushing down on the break as he switches to reverse.

“Hope you don’t mind.” George replies with a nod, and Sapnap shrugs.

“Course I don’t but,” He pauses to focus on reversing out of the spot, shifting the gear stick to drive as he pulls forward. “You know I’ve got to ask why you’re not catching a ride with Dream.”

George is silent as they pull onto the main road, but Sapnap isn’t letting this go. “Come to think of it, you’ve been kinda weird with him the whole practice. Did something happen?”

“I won’t let it interfere with Sunset, don’t worry.” George assures, but Sapnap sighs.

“That’s not what I asked, George.” He replies, and George makes a noncommittal noise in the back of his throat.

“George.” Sapnap’s tone is firm, non-discussionary, and George responds immediately after.

“I kissed Dream.” Sapnap almost crashes the car, foot nearly slamming into the break from shock, car jolting ever so slightly as his mind short-circuits and his hands jerk on the steering wheel.

“Shit-” He says as he regains his control over the vehicle, easing behind an SUV as a red light flashes in front of them. He takes this chance to turn his gaze to regard George, searching for any sort of lie or humor on his face and seeing none. “Holy fuck. You actually did.”

George scoffs. “I wouldn’t lie to you.” Sapnap runs a hand over his face, giving his mind time to reel itself back in before repositioning himself in the seat and easing forward as the light changes to

green.

“I... congrats? I mean, I knew it was coming at some point but,” He pauses “Wait, then why are you acting weird, shouldn’t you be all happy and cutesy n’ shit?” George turns his face away again, resting his chin on his palm and looking out the window. “George.”

A beat of silence.

“I might have immediately gone to my room after and refused to speak to him the rest of the night.” Sapnap blinks rapidly as he processes.

“GEORGE!” He exclaims as they pull into the parking garage of their building, Sapnap sighing in relief when he sees Dream’s car has already pulled in.

“I panicked!” His friend replies, and Sapnap shoots a text to Dream saying they’re running a bit late and to not wait up for them.

“About what? I know he kissed back, you guys have been pining for each other since before you even *dated* Wilbur! What was there to panic about?” Sapnap says as he switches off the car, turning his full attention to George.

George huffs as he clicks off his seatbelt, rolling his eyes before he responds. “You know why.”

“Because you think he’ll leave like Wilbur?” Silence. “*George.*”

“*Yes.*” He hisses out, and Sapnap exhales sharply, running another hand over his face, undoing and redoing his headband as he processes.

“You have a fucking PhD in Computer Science, but you’re still pretty dumb.” George glares at him, and Sapnap raises his hands in defence. “No offence! Look, I get it. Wilbur burned you, now you’re scared of getting too close to the flame. But Dream’s not Wilbur, George.”

“I know.”

“He’s not gonna hurt you like Wilbur did-”

“*I know.*” George says, voice hard. Silence falls in the cab of Sapnap’s truck.

“Look, I’ve known Dream since I was a kid. He’s been obsessed with you since he first *met* you. He was a *mess* when you started dating Will.” That gets George’s attention.

“What?” George asks, eyes wide. Sapnap nods.

“Yeah! Even back then, shit, I had to deal with him *moping* everyday.” He replies, groaning as he remembers the countless hours spent consoling his friend.

“But he didn’t act like it!” George retorts, mouth open, and Sapnap raises a brow at the older.

“Dude. You’re not the only one who’s good at pretending you’re alright.” He says, and George’s mouth snaps shut, eyes darting aside to focus on the steering wheel. Sapnap sighs. “Look, at the end of the day, he cares about you. A lot. Probably loves you, not even gonna lie, but you’ll have to ask him yourself.”

George’s gaze shoots back to him as he watches Sapnap start the car again, bringing the Ford back to life with his foot on the brake. “Talk to him. I’ll be gone for the next hour or so, been meaning to get something done anyways.”

“Wait, but-”

“George. I promise you’ll be fine.” He reaches across to hold George’s shoulder, meeting his worried eyes in the dim light of the parking garage. “He won’t leave you.” George’s eyes are tentative, reserved, but he carefully opens the door, and steps out onto the concrete floors.

“What if I’m not?” Sappnap stops. “Fine, I mean.” His heart pangs at the rawness in his friend’s voice, tone holding the vulnerability only a hopeful damaged heart can provide. He keeps George’s gaze, smiling fondly from the driver’s seat.

“Then you’ll always have me.” George considers for a moment before smiling, raw and unfiltered, and Sappnap feels his heart tighten with the love he holds for his friend. It’s different to the love his friend holds for Dream, but just as strong, and Sappnap lets the joy and pride wash over him in easy waves.

“Thank you Sappnap.” Sappnap nods, salutes, and waits for George to close the door.

“You got this, man.” He assures again, and the door falls shut as George backs up from the side of the truck and heads towards the apartment, waving as Sappnap pulls out from the parking spot, and making his way back towards the road to allow his friends proper time to talk.

He smiles to himself as he turns onto the main road once more, reaching his destination moments later and pulling out his phone in the parking lot, fingers deftly typing in contact names to start a new group chat.

He types out a message, finger hovering over the send button as he rereads the recipients, debating sending it as the bright light reflects his words back to him. But George’s confidence had inspired him, and he’s determined not to let opportunity fall from his grasp. He finally pushes the tiny blue button in the bottom left, exhaling as the ‘dwoop’ sound of the text echoes through the cab, heart pounding ever so slightly as the message reads ‘delivered’.

2 People

Hot Wheels and Color Crush

Hey, if u guys ever wanna hang out, just the three of us, lemme know

-

Sappnap gets back to find Dream and George curled into one another on the couch, sleeping heavily as a Netflix show plays idly in the background, George’s head tucked into Dream’s chest as the blond practically cradles the shorter’s upper body.

He smiles fondly before heading back to his room.

-

The only downfall of having your friends finally realize their undying love for each other is the copious amounts of PDA you’ll be subjected to. Sappnap has walked in on Dream and George in various states of dress, undress, and skin-to-skin contact at least 10 times in the 4 days leading up to Friday’s practice, and while he’s happy for his friends, he hopes the honeymoon phase is over sooner rather than later, or that the two can keep themselves out of Sappnap’s line of sight.

He's desperate for Friday, ready to see Karl and Quackity, and waiting to escape the disgustingly cute grasp of his friend's heinous activity. He's thanking God the walls of their apartment are thick, and praying he doesn't walk in on anything crazier than a heavy makeout.

So far, he's been lucky.

He's grateful work has him driving to practice alone, and as he pulls up and walks into the studio, he's greeted by instruments being tuned, the pleasant lack of PDA, and the generous buffer of Quackity and Karl.

"So~" Quackity says, sidling up next to Sapnap as he begins to plug in his bass, tuning lightly. "Looks like they got their shit together, huh?" The shorter is grinning, as Sapnap huffs exasperated, but fond.

"Yeah. Yeah, it's all cute until you live with them and there's nothing between you and walking in on them making out against the kitchen counter." Sapnap retorts, and Quackity cackles as Sapnap finishes tuning.

"Well, on the bright side, you don't have to deal with them tip-toeing around each other." Quackity says, running his hand down the neck of his guitar. "Pick your poison." Sapnap groans.

"I *guess*." Sapnap says as he adjusts the mic stand in front of him. "Whatever, maybe I need to get new roommates." He groans, and Quackity cackles as George calls a start to their session.

Practice comes to a vibrant end, boasting an incredible session where everything just went *right*.

It's likely the fact that Dream and George are so incredibly in sync that the music falls in place around them, Dream leading confidently and powerfully with his vocals, and George being the steady hand in the back of the piece as they continue.

Quackity is feeding off the energy the two provide as well, and from there, it trickles more into Karl and Sapnap's playing too.

By the end, the set is played almost perfectly through, and 'Turn It Up' sounds so impeccable, Sapnap can't wait to play it on an actual stage, with a crowd cheering in the background as bass melds with electric melds with vocals melds with drums.

He can already hear it, the energy from the crowd being recycled into the music tenfold as the song goes on, and the announcement of their victory over the crackly PA system running through the event.

So as they wind down, spirits high, Sapnap- and everyone else, he supposes -are feeling far more confident and ready for Sunset.

He takes a swig of water, and watches Quackity pack up before the shorter snaps upright in apparent sudden remembrance of something.

"Right! This is a bit awkward, but I uh, I can't make it to practice tomorrow." He says to the group, and silence falls after him before George is commenting.

"What?" Sapnap can already feel the tension growing as George's lips twist into a frustrated frown, and Quackity rubs the back of his neck nervously.

"Yeah, I uh. I can't come. Sorry. I've got an overtime shift at work." Sapnap's eyes flick between Quackity and George nervously, and he notes Dream's growing concern from behind him too.

But where Sapnap is concerned for Quackity, Dream is concerned on George's behalf.

Sapnap meets Karl's eyes from across the room, both bright with apprehension about what might transpire.

"And why would you pick up an overtime shift while we are only two practices out from Sunset?" George asks, voice icy, head tilting up as he regards Quackity with a pointed glare. Those words seem to strike an unwelcome chord in Quackity as the man's expression shifts from open and easy to closed and judgemental.

"None of your business. I can't make it, I'm sorry, but there's nothing I can do." He replies. "I'll still be there Sunday, and I'm going to be there Wednesday too."

"You won't if you aren't here tomorrow, because you'll be out of the band." Dream speaks up from behind, making his way to stand beside the drumset next to George, Sapnap's mouth falls open, gaze flicking between Dream and George, willing the shorter to speak up, but he says nothing.

"What the hell-" He starts, but Quackity cuts him off.

"Excuse me?" The shortest says, taking a step forward, posture stiffening as he regards the two at the drumset.

"You heard me." Dream replies, and Sapnap finally steps up, sidling up next to Quackity and placing a hand on his shoulder.

"What the fuck, Dream, no he will not." He says, and Dream's molten green gaze switches to him.

"Sapnap, it's our second to last practice for Sunset. We only have one left after tomorrow, and if he can't find room in his schedule for us, then he clearly isn't prioritizing the band like he needs to be." His friend says, and Sapnap scoffs as Quackity speaks up again.

"I've already *prioritized* this band, okay, I should be more than allowed to take one practice off, even if it is, unfortunately, so close to the competition." The shorter speaks, voice raising in intensity as he continues. "Believe me, I wouldn't be doing this unless I needed too, I already said I was sorry for having to miss it, but I can't make room for it, my whole Saturday is booked, and, like most people, I'm gonna have to prioritize my basic fucking human needs before an extracurricular."

"This 'extracurricular' is as good as your job, you told us you wanted to make this your career, so we expect you'd treat it as such." George says, finally chiming in, voice cold, Sapnap suppressing an exasperated groan.

"Oh, I'm sorry, is this 'job' gonna pay my rent?" Quackity spits back, brows knit tight, gaze steady. "Because last I checked, you can't even keep a group together long enough to release an album."

Sapnap cringes as the words leave Quackity's mouth, and George stands up abruptly, gaze turning from mildly upset to downright pissed. Sapnap stands between the two, physically putting his body between them, and holding out his hands on either side.

"OK, ok, calm the fuck *down*, both of you, *all* of you." Sapnap says, eyeing particularly at Dream and George, but settling Quackity just as much.

"First of all, no one's being kicked out of the band, leaving the band, or being forced from the

band. I don't care what either of you two say, if you want to kick our fucking *lead* guitarist out less than a week out from Sunset, that is your loss, and *you* can deal with the consequences." He starts, glaring at Dream and George in turn.

"Second of all, Quackity is more than welcome to have a practice off, especially when we know he knows the music as good as any of us. I can cover lead for the day, and we'll be just fucking fine." George keeps his mouth shut, Dream too, the blond looking slightly regretful.

"Third of all, Quackity, I'm sure you have your reasons for missing, but Dream and George *admittedly* have a point. Taking on overtime while we're gearing up for a major competition is a little unprofessional." He says, Quackity's eyes flicking down and away, gaze switching from liquid fire to nervous shame. "I'm not trying to pry, but is there something else going on with your work than what you're telling us? We're here to help, any way we can, no matter what those idiots say." Sapnap says, tilting his head in the direction of Dream and George.

Quackity fiddles with his fingers, running a hand under his beanie while he appears to be running something through his head before finally speaking.

"I uh. I've been taking on some overtime shifts at my jobs because I need more money. My rent just increased, and if I miss this payment, I'm gonna get evicted." He admits, and Sapnap's shoulders fall in sympathy for the shorter. "It's just that paying for an apartment in the fucking city by yourself is *expensive*. This was the cheapest I could find, and- I *used* to have a roommate, but he-" Quackity's expression turns bitter. "He was a bitch, and didn't pull his weight and fuckin' stole from me, and now I'm finally alone but his stupid ass somehow managed to leave all sorts of debt with me. So now, I have to pay for all sorts of shit from his end, and if I can't I'll have to somehow scrounge up the money to face an eviction lawsuit, and I'll be homeless, and it is-" Quackity pauses to inhale "*Incredibly* difficult to find an apartment willing to rent to you when your credit's shit."

Sapnap reaches a hand to pat Quackity's shoulder comfortingly, the older stubbornly keeping his ground, expression tight and holding back tears. "So there. All my baggage. Most of it, anyways." He finishes, and Dream and George have the decency to look slightly ashamed.

"That's pretty shitty. I'm... sorry." Sapnap says, and offers a hug to Quackity who takes it, letting Sapnap hold him tight for a moment before pulling back.

"Again, I'm really sorry that I have to miss practice. I know it's shitty timing, but I've *got* to prioritize not being fucking homeless over the band, and if that gets me kicked out, so be it." He says, and Sapnap shakes his head.

"No, you're not getting fucking kicked, *right* Dream?" Sapnap says, glaring pointedly at the blond when he says as such. Dream nods, the original frustration with the situation fading as the explanation holds significant weight.

"No. You're definitely not." Dream says. "And..." he stops to look at George and Sapnap in turn, flicking his gaze to Quackity and back in silent communication. Sapnap nods, and George too as Dream continues. "If you need a place to stay, our apartment's got an extra room Sap's been using for gathering dust on exercise equipment he swears he'll use." The attempt at humor is not lost, and Quackity cracks a small smile that Dream reciprocates.

"For real?" He asks, and George is the one who nods.

"Rent is cheaper split amongst four anyways." The brunette says, and Dream knocks at his head teasingly.

“George! Come on now, we can cover his rent until he’s back on his feet.” He chides, and George huffs but rolls his eyes and nods.

“Fine.” Sarnap grins at the two and turns to Quackity.

“Absolutely. If you want it, it’s open to you, and-” Sarnap looks back to regard Karl, who’s remained patiently quiet throughout the entire tiff. “If you ever find yourself wanting out of your Mom’s basement, you’re always welcome too, I’m sure.” George scoffs as the tension finally lifts, the room falling back into easy discussion as they resume clearing up the studio.

“Let’s get through Sunset first.” The brunette mutters, causing Karl to giggle from where he’s hefted his bag over his shoulder.

“No worries, I’m not looking to move out quite yet, but maybe in the future.” Karl replies, and Sarnap grins.

“Always welcome, dude.” He reinstates, and turns back to Quackity. “Alright, we’ll miss you tomorrow, and whenever you want, we can help you move. If you need money spotted to cover what’s left of your rent, let us know, I’m sure we can pull something together.” Sarnap assures, and Dream nods.

“Of course. And uh, I’m sorry about what I said.” The taller says, sheepishly scratching at his neck. “I, um, shouldn’t have been so quick to say all that stuff, and I didn’t mean it. I’m just stressed, and that’s no excuse, but I hope it helps explain it.” Quackity grins up at him, holding out a hand for the blond to shake.

“I get it. I’ll be fine getting through this last cycle of rent with the overtime tomorrow, thank you for offering that though. And, hey, I’m sorry too. The uh, album comment was kinda outta pocket.” Quackity replies, and Dream snorts.

“It was kinda fair, to be honest.” Sarnap laughs at Dream’s comment as they switch off the amps and speakers, Quackity grinning at the singer before George clears his throat, switching Quackity’s attention to himself.

“I’m... sorry as well. I shouldn’t have been so,” He pauses to look at Sarnap, who nods reassuringly. “Restrictive. I guess. For lack of a better word. You should em. You should always prioritize your life and well-being above the band.” The brunette says, and Sarnap smiles at him. “That goes for all of you.” He adds sheepishly, and Dream wraps an arm around George’s waist and pulls him into a hug, pressing a kiss into his hair at the sweet statement. Sarnap fake gags, garnering a laugh from Quackity and Karl and a glare from George.

“Gross. Let’s get home, I think we all need a little rest before tomorrow.” Sarnap says, and he’s met with general sounds of agreement as they exit the studio.

Warm summer air greets them as they exit the cold of the studio, and bid each other farewell, Sarnap reminding Quackity to text him when he’s ready to move in and promising to have the extra room cleared up for him as soon as possible.

As they get in Dream’s car, Sarnap whacks both of his friends on the back of their heads as he slides in behind them.

“Idiots.” He chides with a grin, and neither says anything, save for begrudgingly embarrassed mutters under their breath.

“I mean, we got a new roommate out of it. You can start making some moves on him.” Dream says

with a wink in the rearview mirror as he finally lifts his head, and Sapnap snorts, rolling his eyes.

“Oh great, another victim to be subjected to your disgusting PDA. Will you bless his eyes with half naked intensive kissing in the bathroom at 7 AM too?” Sapnap says dryly, and George snorts.

“If he’s lucky.” Dream replies, and Sapnap groans as they finally pull out of the parking lot.

With two practices left until Sunset, he knows everyone’s feeling confident and ready. And even with the small fight in the studio, the fact that they worked through it and came out on the other end is further than anyone else’s made it before. It gives Sapnap an overwhelming sense of confidence as he heads up to the extra room, flipping on the lights and regarding the mass of items he, George, and Dream will have to find places for in the coming days.

But, he figures it will be worth it, and he hopes one day, Karl can join them.

Chapter End Notes

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Hope you guys enjoyed!

I will, of course, see you all next Sunday with another Chapter.

In the meantime, make sure to leave your kudos and comments (I reply to them all!), as well as check out my [twitter](#)!

Another big thanks to [Finn](#) and [Angel](#) for helping to bring this chapter to fruition, y'all are the best!

See you guys next week,
Cure

Four

Chapter Summary

Moving in and moving up.

Chapter Notes

Ok, so this is such a late chapter akhskdhsag, ah well, c'est la vie.

I hope you guys enjoy, lol, despite it's lateness.

Check me out on [twitter](#), if you'd like, and also check out the [playlist](#) for this fic!

Hope y'all enjoy, QuackNap, my beloved <3

-

BETA'd once, pray for me

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Sapnap gets them through Saturday's practice on lead, butchering through some of the covers by simply playing the chords, and while the clear lack of Quackity is present and frustrating, they manage just fine until Sunday.

They're gathered in the studio warming up, energy high and somewhat anxious as they prepare for their final practice, and Sapnap lets the nerves fuel his energy as he plucks some riffs and tunes his strings.

The next time the group performs, it will be on a stage in front of thousands of people and under the pressure of a competition, not the small, enclosed space of a private studio, he realizes.

This fact is both exciting and nerve-wracking.

"Ok, so, to review: We're performing 'Turn It Up' on Wednesday, the day of the competition." George starts, meeting the eyes of everyone in the studio, making sure he has their attention before continuing. "If we win-"

"When." Quackity interrupts with a smile, and Sapnap claps his hand in a high-five.

"-when we win," George says with a small smile, adjusting his speech pattern. "we'll be performing this set in this order: '1985', leading into American Idiot, followed by 'James Dean', the first of our original pieces, then 'Stacy's Mom', 'Freaking Out', and 'Panic Vertigo' after that, 'Check Yes, Juliet' a return back to covers, 'I Want You To', the final original work, 'Way With Words', and our finale, 'Gives You Hell'." George pauses, let's the information sink in despite weeks of practicing that same order. "All good?"

The group nods, and Quackity plucks the beginning notes of the vocal line to '1985' as they move back to their places. "Let's fucking *rock*." He says, and George grins as he starts the count in.

They run the set once, and Sapnap can't help but feel excited at the incredible sound. He really does hope they win, because the set they have planned sounds fantastic, and he knows the crowd will love it too.

Their synergy is off the charts, honed and perfected from weeks of long hours, and even though it felt like such a feat to meld so well and so quickly, this group has, as Sapnap has come to know, always subverted his expectations.

They finish practice giddy and excited, energy high. They've come so far, Sapnap realizes proudly as they walk down to the parking lot, George talking animatedly and readily with Quackity, Karl holding a conversation with Dream and chiming into Quackity's side every now and again.

They'd had their ups and downs, sure, but despite it all, they still stood strong.

Even with Dream's reprimands and George's strong personality, Karl had pushed through and even learned a thing or two about music.

Even with the argument from Friday's practice, which had been rather easily resolved, Quackity had still come back. Sapnap hadn't missed the satisfaction in George's eyes when the lead had showed up at today's practice, and Sapnap realized a small part of the brunette probably still thought he wouldn't.

For all their sakes, he had, and their final practice was over and done with, boasting a powerful song for the competition segment and an even more powerful set for if- no, *when*, Sapnap reminds himself, Quackity's interjection from earlier on his mind, they won.

Karl is heading to his Honda by the time he tunes back in, the brunette calling Sapnap's name from his doormat until Sapnap finally waves to him, calling out a farewell that Karl returns with a smile before hopping in and driving away.

That leaves Quackity, who's still in some deep conversation with George, Dream nearby, scrolling through his phone as he absently side-hustles the chat.

Sapnap makes his way over, draping an arm across Dream's back, garnering his friend's attention as Quackity and George wrap up their conversation.

"What an asshole right?" The shorter says, probably in reference to whatever he was talking about with George as the brunette nods expressively. "Oh, now that I've got you three, um, when do you guys think you'll have that room ready? I kinda wanna get out of there as soon as I can. At least before Sunset. If that's, like, possible." Quackity asks, somewhat nervous.

Sapnap flashes him a grin as Dream nods and answers.

"Yeah, we can make that happen. I think Sap spent most of yesterday and today clearing out the room, all that's left is for us to deep clean, get all the dust and stuff out of there and we're good to go. We can probably have you in on Tuesday if you spend Monday packing?" Dream suggests, and Quackity nods slowly. "Depending on how much you have to pack. We can always help too, not all of us need to deep clean, and it will likely be left to me. So you can have Sap and George help you out."

"Actually, I was going to help you." George says, and Sapnap groans as he notes the look the two share, already knowing it's an excuse to spend more time together with Sapnap out of the house.

“Ok, ok, I’ll help Quackity pack up tomorrow, please don’t fuck in the room after you cleaned it, that would be literally horrible hostmanship.” Sapnap says, Quackity keeling over from the force of his sudden laugh.

“SAPNAP!” George exclaims while Dream stifles a laugh of his own.

“What? He’s gonna have to get used to it anyways, I’m literally so hyped I don’t have to be the only one affected by your stupid PDA.” Sapnap continues, and then turns to Quackity. “Ok, look, just shoot me a text when you want me to come over, and I can bring some extra boxes n’ shit.” He says with a smile that Quackity returns, a careful softness in his eyes that makes Sapnap’s heart melt.

“Alright, yeah, I will.” The shorter replies, and Sapnap reaches out a hand to fist bump him.

“Cool man. See ya tomorrow.” He bids the older farewell as they finally part, and they head to their respective abodes, soon to be one shared home.

-

Hot Wheels

Today 2:30

Ok, so u've got work until 5, I decided to leave work early today to start packing, so just come on down when ur finished

Y

And I've got plenty of boxes, pls don't bring anymore

I think I will be happy if I never see another cardboard box in my life, and I've only just picked them up from the store.

Lmao, noted.

I'll join you around 5:30 then, lemme know if u need anything, I can probs grab it on my way from work

Will do, ty again!

See you at 5:30 :]

-

Sapnap finishes up his day and makes his way towards Quackity's apartment, following the GPS as it takes him closer towards the inner city downtown area, and Sapnap lets himself admire the location before parking in an empty spot outside a line of complexes.

He rings the buzzer on the outside, waiting until Quackity's familiar voice crackles through the intercom and welcomes him, repeating the specific number of his apartment as Sapnap opens the door and makes his way there.

He gets to Quackity's door, knocks once and waits for the door to be opened as a bright smiling face greets him pulling him into a hug and inside the apartment, closing the door behind him.

"Sapnap! Good to see you man, been a while, huh?" The shorter teases, and Sapnap scoffs with a grin as he takes in the apartment, half packed away into brown cardboard boxes the rest strewn with vaguely sorted objects.

"I see you've been busy. Well, where do you want me?" He asks, clapping his hands together, and Quackity hums thoughtfully.

"Well, let's start with my bedroom, I was just beginning to pack everything there up. I've got all of the kitchen done and the office. I think what we've got left is just my bedroom, the bathroom, and the living room." Quackity muses as he leads Sapnap back towards the hallway tucked away in the corner of the back of the room. "And then I've got to figure out how to get all the furniture and shit moved too, cause those will definitely not fit in boxes."

"Well, I've got your solution, and it's sitting on the curb outside your place," Sapnap says with a grin and Quackity laughs jubilantly.

"Oh yeah, you've got your little truck." He comments, and Sapnap snorts as they enter the last door on the right.

"She is not *little*." He pouts, and Quackity turns to catch his gaze.

"You know what they say about people with big trucks." He comments with a smirk, and Sapnap scoffs, moving closer to Quackity with a grin, using the inch or so of height between them to force the older's gaze upwards.

"Well I can assure you, you don't have to worry about those silly *little* rumors." He teases, Quackity meeting him with a glittering gaze of mirth.

"Ok, 4-String. Here's hoping you more than compensate for it." He quips back with a wink, and Sapnap steps back with a laugh, heart pounding, as Quackity bustles to grab a box from the door, tossing it towards Sapnap. "Construct the box and just start packing things into it based upon their pile. If you run out of room, grab a new box. Label it as much as you can with at least 3 items of what's inside or, if there's a more common or general theme, use that."

Sapnap nods as he unfolds the cardboard and begins tucking the flaps along the bottom, locating a pile of what appears to be books and knickknacks, beginning to place them carefully into the boxes.

“Oh, any music suggestions? I was just gonna put on some classic rock.” Quackity asks, pulling out his phone and scrolling through what Sapnap assumes is a music library.

“Nah, classic rock sounds great.” He replies, and Quackity nods as Bob Seger starts filtering through the surround sound evidently installed in the space, and together, they begin packing.

-

A few hours later, and more than a few playlists songwise, the entire apartment has been squared away into boxes save for the furniture and the things Quackity has set aside for his suitcase and more personal luggage.

Dream has texted Sapnap that they have the room fully ready for Quackity, and Sapnap relays this information to the older who smiles fondly before they both plop down onto the sofa still present in the living room.

“Holy shit.” Quackity says breathlessly, and Sapnap hums in agreement.

“And just think, you get to unpack it all starting tomorrow.” Quackity cackles, reaching across to shove Sapnap lightly as he gets out a ‘Shut up, dude.’ through copious amounts of giggles.

They exist in the silence of the apartment, breaths mixing as they revive from their hardwork until Sapnap speaks a few moments later.

“I can bring a few of the bigger things to the apartment tonight if you want.” He suggests. “I’ve got the stuff in the truck. And tomorrow, I can bring your furniture to the storage unit we rented.”

Quackity nods as he shifts to sit up on the couch, hand tracing along the arm of it as he does so.

“Yeah, maybe you could bring, like, the bed frame and bedside table there tonight. I was just gonna sleep on my mattress.” Quackity says.

“We could definitely get your frame there tonight. And yeah, a bedside table for sure. Mattress will probably be tomorrow’s journey although, depending how the frame compares to size...” Sapnap eyes the bedroom like he could see through the walls, and Quackity laughs.

“You think?” He asks, and Sapnap eyes his watch. 10:26PM.

“Doable. If you want.” They stare at each other a moment, a silent communication before they’re moving simultaneously, Sapnap grabbing the door and his keys before they make their way to the bedroom, grabbing segments of the already broken down bed frame, and dutifully carrying the bits to the truck.

They manage to fit the frame in the 8ft bed, and Sapnap gets the ratchet straps he had brought, preparing them to hook the mattress into place.

He and Quackity take a moment to eye the truck, comparing the mental image of the mattress to the size of the bed.

“You sure it’ll fit?” Quackity asks, sidling up next to Sapnap. Sapnap squints and then shrugs.

“Probably. One way or another. And look, anything fits if you strap it in place hard enough.” He says, and Quackity grins as they start back towards the apartment to grab the mattress.

On the way, he messages Dream the change of plans, and receives a thumbs up reaction to his

message from the blond. He huffs fondly at the simple reply but shoves his phone into his pocket as he picks up the mattress and begins to navigate it out of the apartment and towards the truck, trying not to let the large item touch the ground.

“Watch the-” Quackity wheezes as they work down the stairs “Watch the *walls*, Sap.”

Sapnap giggles back as they maneuver it down, catching himself as he almost trips making Quackity laugh harder, and consequently Sapnap too.

“Dude, *dude*, shut up, you’re making me lose my grip.” Sapnap says through more laughter as they finally reach the door, Sapnap resting his end of the mattress on his back as he leans forward to open it. “Ok, now be *careful*, if we drop it on the road it’s over.”

Quackity giggles as they sway towards the truck, finally heaving it onto the sides of the bed, and stepping back to take a look at what they’re working with.

Sapnap inhales as the mattress sits slightly over on all sides, resting on top as opposed to in the bed as originally planned. Quackity sidles up next to him, whistling as he eyes the size difference.

“Well, it’s close. Ish.” He comments, and Sapnap nods slightly.

“It’ll do.” He says, and Quackity looks at him with a brow quirked in confusion. “Go to the other side and throw me the strap that’s hanging there.”

“Dude, no chance this doesn’t fall out.” Quackity says, doing as he was told regardless.

“I mean, it’s a pretty short drive from yours to mine, and these straps pack heat for keeping things tight. We won’t be driving insanely fast, I think it’s totally winnable.” Sapnap replies, receiving the straps and tucking them under the mattress, finding the hooks built into the bed before going back to adjust the ratchet part until it’s tight.

Quackity watches him amusedly, eyes flicking up and down as Sapnap forces an extra squeeze of the strap, pushing the pressure to the limits before lifting a hand to slap the mattress firmly.

“That’ll do it.” He says, and Quackity scoffs with a smirk.

“If it doesn’t, you owe me a new mattress.” He comments, and Sapnap shrugs.

“Fair enough. Go lock up, grab your suitcase ‘n shit, we can throw that into the backseats, and we’ll be off.” He says, and Quackity nods, heading back towards the apartment.

In the meanwhile, Sapnap gets in the driver’s side and starts the truck, eyeing the mattress in the rearview mirror and adjusting his mindset to have an extended load. Quackity reappears tugging a suitcase that he dumps unceremoniously into the empty backseats of the extended cab, before settling into the passenger seat happily, pulling the door shut.

“Alright, time to put your straps to the test.” He says as he buckles his seatbelt, and Sapnap grins as he maneuvers out of the parking spot and gets them on the road.

They arrive all in one piece, mattress still attached onto the back of the bed and as Sapnap parks, Quackity eyes the still in place mattress, impressed.

“Told ya we’d be good.” He shoots a brief text to Dream and George letting them know they’ve

arrived and asking for their help. Going up a flight of stairs for Quackity's apartment is one thing, but his, Dream's, and George's is a couple more flights than that.

He gets a brief 'ok' message from George and stuffs his phone into his back pocket, releasing the pressure of the straps. They fall loose over the mattress allowing Sapnap to easily unhook them from the bed and slide them off.

A few minutes later, George and Dream are coming through the door of the parking garage, the shorter staying back to hold the door as Sapnap and Quackity pick up the mattress once more.

"If you wanna grab the bed frame, Dream." Sapnap suggests, and his friend nods, taking down the tailgate as Sapnap begins walking towards the open door, him and Quackity working carefully to ease the mattress around the corners and through the doors.

With George giving them directions and guiding them through the flights and levels, they eventually make it to their apartment, the brunette opening the door and allowing them through, Sapnap leading the way towards Quackity's new room, and the two let down the mattress with a groan of content, flopping down onto the bare surface as Dream follows behind with the detached frame, setting it off to the side and eyeing the two on the mattress.

"You're not even gonna wait for some sheets? Gross." The blond comments, and Sapnap shoots him a lazy middle finger as George re-enters and sets down a drill next to the frame.

"There, put it together now, because I'm heading to bed soon and I do not want to hear drill noises while I'm falling asleep. Welcome, by the way, Quackity." He says, motioning towards the painfully empty room.

Quackity grins from on the mattress.

"Thanks George! Looks great!" He responds, and George just grunts before tugging on Dream's shirt and taking the blond with him as he exits.

"Sleep well!" Dream manages to call out before the door shuts leaving Sapnap and Quackity to their own devices.

For a moment, there's nothing but the careful silence of their tandem breaths as they recover from the mattress moving.

"We better start drilling." Sapnap says, but neither make any move to. He hears Quackity's shoes drop off against the floor and the older shifts to rest his full body on the mattress, sighing with relief.

Sapnap follows suit, and twists around, underestimating how close he was to Quackity, noses almost touching as he switches direction. The two giggle softly as they allow each other more space, though, not much more, Sapnap notes contentedly as his heart beats warmly.

"Hey." He says, voice soft, and Quackity giggles again.

"Hey, 4-String." He replies, voice just as soft, eyes meeting in the warm light of the room. They glitter softly, and Sapnap lets himself take in Quackity's features, eyes tracking the moles in various places around the shorter's face and finally settling back on the midnight dark of his irises.

They shine fondly, Sapnap hopes, and the urge to close the distance and kiss him, right there, is oddly overwhelming. Sapnap redirects the strength of that emotion to admiring Quackity once more, reaching out a hand almost unconsciously to tuck a stray piece of the older's hair back under

his beanie.

Quackity's breath hitches slightly as Sapnap's finger comes in contact with his skin, and his eyes track the movement of Sapnap's hand as he pulls it back.

He flushes as he realizes what he had done, pulling his hand back more swiftly averting his gaze. "Sorry, I just- it looked-" Quackity huffs softly, a gentle smile curving across his lips.

"S fine Sap, I don't mind." He replies and Sapnap sends a small smile back. Their breaths mingle as Sapnap watches the light in the living room go out, signifying George's complete retirement to bed, and he lets himself trace his eyes across the careful divots in Quackity's face once more, noting what looks like a fading scar in his eyebrow leading down to just above his eye, and another, a slight white line in the bottom corner of his mouth.

His eyes stay on Quackity's mouth a little longer than what's probably respectful, the wanton desires from earlier returning ten-fold until he finally manages to pull his gaze away, sitting upright.

"Uhm, well, I should probably get you some sheets and the uh-" Sapnap motions at the drill in the corner. "Do you still wanna do that or, like-"

"It can wait till the morning. I'm just dog-tired." Quackity says, with a yawn punctuating his sentence. Sapnap nods.

"No, yeah, fair enough lemme uhm." He clears his throat. "Let me get you some sheets, I'll be right back." He says, standing up and pulling himself from the warmth of the bed, and the desired company lying on it.

He grabs a set of sheets, brings them back and Quackity jumps into action helping him spread them across the mattress. Sapnap hands Quackity an extra comforter that the older takes with a soft 'Thank you', and spreads it over the top.

"Right, well, I'll uh, leave you to it." Sapnap says, and Quackity eyes him from where he's pulled out his toothbrush and other such hygiene products.

"Thanks for everything, Sapnap." Quackity replies with a smile, and Sapnap feels his heart skip a beat as he smiles back.

"Yeah, no problem." He replies, and his voice is softer than he had intended. "Uh, bathroom's a shared one with my room, sorry. Right through that door." He says, motioning towards one of the doors. "You can have it first, I'll brush my teeth and stuff later. Goodnight, Quackity."

"Night, Sapnap. Sleep well." The shorter replies, and Sapnap grins, turning to leave. He stops at the door frame.

"And, hey, Quackity? Welcome home." The smile he gets back from Quackity is worth all the effort of moving the mattress here, and Sapnap lets the high of it carry him to his own room, grabbing his shoes on the way out and changing into his PJs for the night.

He waits until he hears the door to Quackity's room shut before he heads into the bathroom to brush his teeth for the night, and wash his face, before returning to his own room, lying on his mattress and staring at the ceiling, smiling fondly at nothing as the day runs by in his head.

As the house falls into the silence only night can bring, Sapnap finds solace in the presence of someone in the room next to his for the first time in ages, and finds himself falling into an easy

sleep as the night carries on.

Chapter End Notes

And there we are!

Hope you guys enjoyed, make sure to check out my [twitter](#), as well as to leave your kudos and comments, I reply to them all!

I can't believe we got to 400 kudos on this work already, that's crazy you guys! Thank you for all the love <3

See y'all next week, and LET SUNSET BEGIN! Aha! It's time!!!

-Cure

Static

Chapter Summary

It's Sunset time, and the boys are ready to enjoy their day. Or are they?

Chapter Notes

God, this chapter has good bits and bad bits, but I'm overall happy with it. Hope you guys enjoy the first of the Sunset chapters too!

Sorry it's late again BUT at least it's not midnight, eeeyyyy???

ALSO PUTTING A WARNING FOR PAST TOXIC RELATIONSHIP REFERENCED/DISCUSSED. I will be adding this in the tags, it was somewhat unplanned hence why it wasn't there previous.

Anyways, make sure to check out my [twitter](#), it's super cool, I Promise.

Also the [playlist](#) for this fic! I have had many notable sources say the songs on there are bangers :D

Anywho, enjoy!

-

BETA'd once, lmaoooo

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“Q, did you grab the water bottles?” Sapnap calls, frantically loading a backpack with various snacks. Somewhere behind him, Dream is running through a check-list for the tenth time, and George is pointing out something he’s somehow missed.

“Yeah, do you want them by you?” Quackity responds, dancing around one of the stray boxes that has yet to be unpacked as he nears Sapnap, balancing five water bottles from his hands.

“Just put them on the counter for now, we can grab them on the way out. Cheez-Its or Goldfish?” He asks, eyes darting between the two snacks in either hand, debating which to put in the sack.

Quackity goes to answer, but George beats him to it, sliding in between the two and grabbing the bag of Goldfish to put back in the cabinet. “Cheez-Its.” He says, and Sapnap shoves him as the brunette grabs whatever he had come for originally and returns to Dream.

Quackity giggles from beside him as Sapnap begrudgingly packs the cheddar squares into the bag and finally zips it up, turning away from the counter with a relieved sigh. Quackity’s eyes meet him from the other side of the small kitchen space, sparkling and bright even in the morning light.

“It’s Sunset day.” He says, voice soft and nervous, holding clear excitement nonetheless. Sapnap

grins back as Dream and George bicker about something in the background.

“Sure is. You ready to rock, Hot Wheels?” He replies, and Quackity beams back at him, eyes crinkling in the corner as his lips curve up, enunciating the small scar tucked at the bottom of them.

“You know it, 4-String.”

“Stop flirting and help us load the truck,” George’s voice calls from behind them, and Sapnap rolls his eyes. “We’re meant to be picking up Karl in-” George grabs Dream’s arm to check the blond’s watch. “5 minutes, and the car isn’t even packed.”

“That’s rich, coming from you.” Sapnap says, but slides the backpack over his shoulders anyways, grabbing some of the water bottles from behind Quackity. The shorter grabs the rest as they make their way to Dream and George in the middle of the living room, using their free hands to grab everything else they can.

“I texted Karl we’re running a bit late.” Dream replies as George releases his arm, ducking down to grab some of the equipment scattered along the floor.

“Good, you’ve got the van keys right?” Sapnap double checks, because last year, they had barely managed to get to the battle in time after they had left the keys to their van at the apartment. Thankfully, Dream nods, bringing up his hands to dangle the keys in front of him. “Alright, we should be all set.”

“I’ve got the door.” Dream says, picking up what’s left before the four make their way out, ready for a fun day of enjoying the festival and themselves before the competition later that night.

They pile into Sapnap’s Ford, the youngest forcing Dream and George into the backseats under the ground that Quackity’s music taste was better than any of theirs, and finally, they pull out, ready to grab Karl and stop by the studio.

15 minutes later, and 30 minutes late, Dream is texting the rhythm guitarist that they’ve arrived and Sapnap is hanging his head out the window as Karl comes down the stairs of his complex, grinning as he greets the group.

“Hey Jacobs, hop in!” Sapnap calls jovially, and Karl giggles as he slides in behind Sapnap and next to Dream and George in the back. “We’re stopping by the studio first to put all our equipment and stuff there, as well as load the van for later, and then it’s on to Sunset to enjoy the day!”

“Gotcha!” Karl replies, and then motions towards his bag. “I’m not sure what you guys wear for performing, but I got some fun stuff for you guys to try out, like face makeup and such.” He explains. “I couldn’t help myself when I was getting my stage outfit, I saw so many things that reminded me of you guys!”

Sapnap grins in the rearview, heart beating fondly as they start on their way to the studio. “Aw Karl, thanks man!” He says, and watches Quackity lean back curiously from his periphery.

“Oo, are those matching bandannas? We’ve got to wear those!” The shortest exclaims, and Sapnap catches Karl’s bright nod in the mirror.

“This looks like some epic stuff Karl, really cool!” Dream comments as well, and Sapnap let’s his friends’ easy conversation take them the rest of the way to the studio.

They arrive and flood out of the truck, talking animatedly about the attractions they want to hit at

the festival, and together, they manage to grab all the equipment and begin loading it into the van parked in the private lot around the back of the building.

By the time they've finished getting it as packed as they can for later, leaving the instruments inside the studio for now to avoid any potential heat damage, the excitement for the day's activity has amounted to an incredible high, and George has to corral the group of them back to the truck.

Quackity immediately takes the aux, blasting 'Teenagers' by My Chemical Romance as they pull out of the parking lot, all the windows down as they scream the lyrics to the iconic song, summer air rushing through the cab in a mix of breezy humidity and late morning dew.

It's an incredible load off, easing what was left of the stress for the events to come, and replacing it with the perfect summer mood as they pull onto the highway towards the venue Sunset Band Fever was being held at.

"10 BUCKS ONE OF THE YOUTH DIVISION GROUPS PERFORM THIS SONG!" Quackity calls over the music, referencing the MCR song still playing.

"THAT'S NOT EVEN A BET, SOMEONE DOES IT EVERY YEAR!" George shouts back, and Quackity laughs, high and lost in the sound of the speakers.

"EXACTLY, WHICH MAKES IT A FUN BET IF THEY DON'T!" Quackity yells back, and this time Karl giggles at the lead guitarist's antics.

"I'LL TAKE YOUR BET QUACKITY, EVEN THOUGH I KNOW DAMN WELL I'M GONNA LOSE." Sapnap eventually decides, and Quackity reaches his hand across the center console to make it official, Sapnap switching the hand on the wheel from his right to his left as he signs himself up for a loss of 10 dollars.

The rest of the ride is spent with good music, perhaps slightly less screamy singing as they attempt to save their voices for performing later, but with high energy nonetheless, and as Sapnap pulls into the grass parking lot, he turns down the speaker system and parks the car, letting the others pile out and grabbing the backpack of snacks and other various items. He slings it over his arms and joins the group as they cluster around the truck bed.

"Alright guys, here's everyone's pass," Sapnap says, grabbing the printed receipts showing they'd already paid for their entry tickets. "And I'll give everyone the performance passes closer to when we're actually gonna perform."

The other four take the sheet of paper with a nod and begin towards the entrance, following the other groups of people as they flood towards the gates, tracking eagerly across the uneven terrain.

"Ok, but we're hitting the vendor street, and I *will* be going to see Journey From Pluto perform." Quackity says as they reach the teller, readying their receipts.

They all present their papers and are handed neon orange wristbands to attach, Sapnap helping Quackity attach his as the shorter distracts himself with his conversation with Dream.

"But they're performing at the same time as DREAM XD, and I've been wanting to see them all summer. You'll be on your own." Dream replies, puzzling over his wrist band for a moment before wordlessly holding out his hand to George who huffs before attaching the band securely.

Sapnap snickers.

"You probably only like him because he's got your name in his stagenam." Quackity retorts, no

real malice in his tone as they walk up the entrance path towards the main attractions.

“That or because he’s just an awesome performer.” Karl chimes in, and Dream motions at the brunette excitedly.

“See? Karl knows what’s up. And yeah, maybe a little, but it’s a win-win when he’s got great music AND a super cool name.” The blond replies with a smirk, and Quackity sighs dramatically.

“I’ll pass, on both, actually.” George replies, and Sapnap scoffs.

“Yeah ‘cause you’re gonna be watching that up and comer you swear by in Pavillion F.” He teases, and George snorts.

“Saint’s Jaw is going to be a big thing, ok, and when they’re selling out stadiums, I’ll get to say I was there from the beginning.” The brunette replies, and Sapnap can’t find it in himself to be angry, instead fixing his friend with an affectionate smile before turning back to Quackity.

“I’ll join you at Journey From Pluto. I’ve listened to a few of their songs and liked them, and the group I wanna see, Fireborn, are on right after them on the same stage. Saves me the walk.” He says, and Quackity grins at him happily, reaching out a hand for a high-five.

“Alright Sap, let’s go!” The older replies and Sapnap looks at the schedule again.

“Those guys don’t start until 2:30 though, so you guys wanna hit the vendor hall until then?” The festival had started at 12, and they had arrived around 1 after all was said and done, the perfect time for the event to start filling with people but not be overwhelming.

“Sure, sounds like a plan to me.” Dream agrees, and George nods from beside him where he’s Sapnap notes, holding Dream’s hand. Cute.

“I’m down too, I was thinking on picking up some Bloodmoon merch anyways.” Quackity says, and Sapnap nods.

“Ohh yeah, I hadn’t even thought about that, but if they’ve got a stand selling any sort of Wildcat Angel merch, I’m literally gonna go broke.” The brunette says, and Quackity laughs as they route their direction towards the area of the festival for vendors.

The festival is slowly starting to garner more people, filling up as performances start and music begins to fill the area, different sounds coming from the different pavilions and stages scattered around the event.

The smell of funnel cakes and fried food trails delectably behind music notes as vendors serve hungry guests, and Sapnap knows he’ll have to get some ridiculously carb-filled food between performances, even if he’ll regret the calories in the morning.

The merchandise vendors are situated in a designated area, away from the food and the different little arcade-like games set up along the way, and while some are on the street, set up under tents and overhangs, a large section falls within an exhibition hall.

The 5 of them meander around and away from each other as different stands catch their attentions, and Sapnap finds himself taking a look at some neat custom rig bags for guitars, chatting with the vendor about the materials used when Karl sidles up next to him.

“Oh wow, these are super neat!” He comments, and Sapnap grins, finishing up his conversation to focus his attention on Karl, grabbing a business card before turning away and moving towards the

next stall with the brunette and waving farewell to the vendor.

“Those were awesome, I think I’ll check them out later.” Karl murmurs just above the noise of the crowd, and Sapnap nods in agreement.

“Oh yeah? I feel like you could make your own. I like your outfit today, by the way.” He says, and he motions to Karl’s clothing choice for the day, a tasteful set of Karl Customized jean shorts paired with a worn graphic tee with a band name on it, Bitter Cattails, a group Sapnap hasn’t heard the end of from Karl. He’s also got on a black leather choker that pairs nicely with the black metal earring dangling from his left ear, and contrasts with the creme of Karl’s skin, drawing out the red undertones from the flush of summer heat.

Karl giggles, and raises a hand to run through his hair before responding as the two scan their eyes over a guitar pick vendor. “I probably could, but I like supporting small businesses like that, ya know? And thank you!” He steps back to give Sapnap a twirl, spinning on the balls of his feet to show off his fit, and Sapnap grins, flushing lightly despite himself, as Karl comes back to a still position. “Figured the sweater and jeans would be way too hot.”

“I don’t blame you, especially since we’ll be walking around a lot.” Sapnap agrees, and Karl looks him up and down for a moment before returning to fix Sapnap with an unimpressed look.

“You say that, but you’re still in black skinny jeans.” He comments, and Sapnap laughs, looking at his own choice of pants.

“Ok, but they have a lot of holes in them. Very breathable. Besides, I’ve always done well in the heat.” He says with a shrug, and Karl inspects a guitar pick with a smile. Sapnap watches his fingers flit across the surface of the tempered plastic, admiring the perpetually painted nails with a smile.

“You did Feral Boys themed nails.” He notes, voice fond. Karl looks up, and Sapnap catches him flush as he spreads his fingers to admire the paint job, looking embarrassed for it to have been noticed.

“Oh yeah, I just figured it would be themey since we’re performing today.” He says, and Sapnap reaches out to grab his hand, splaying the older’s fingers out in his palm to examine the nails further.

Karl lets him with no resistance, and Sapnap traces his eyes over the five nails on his right hand.

The thumb is the pale purple he’s come to associate with Karl, topped by that desaturated teal the brunette is so fond of in a square spiral pattern, and it’s mirrored on his other hand, like the rest of the nails. The next finger down is orange, and Sapnap realizes it’s the one to represent him with a giddy grin, heart skipping a beat.

It’s half black and white checkered, half a solid pale orange, and a flame has been painstakingly painted overtop of the design in various shades of deep orange and yellow. He rubs a finger pad over the nail as if he wasn’t sure it was real, and he’s so touched by the choice in nail-coverage, that that might be the case.

“That one’s you, I put it next to me and Quackity’s.” Karl says, pointing to the next nail down where a nail has been painted a deep navy, Quackity’s blocky smile tattoo painted over it in black with a bright yellow drop shadow. “And then I shoved Dream and George at the end.” He says, enunciating this with a wiggle of the ring and pinky fingers.

Sapnap giggles as he looks at the last two, admiring the baby blue on Karl's ring finger, a tiny pair of goggles on the surface and a stripe of red in between the image and the tip, and next to it, Dream's signature bright green, his silly smile doodle he so often places on his items on top of the near neon color and contrasting the soft blue of George's next door.

"Wow, that's crazy cool. How did you paint them on so tiny?" He asks, sparing a glance at the other hand. Both are near perfect, and Sapnap wonders for a moment if Karl is ambidextrous.

Karl just giggles again and makes a thoughtful sound in the back of his throat.

"Practice? Pain? A little of both?" This time it's Sapnap's turn to giggle as he releases Karl's hand, missing the warmth of it in his palm already.

"Well, it's really cool. You should show the others when you get a chance." He says, and Karl smiles at him, still flushed.

"I might." Sapnap grins at him reassuringly as Quackity then bounds up to them, Dream and George trailing slowly behind.

"Guys, they have a whole booth for Menagerie of Mentality stuff, and I know you guys are just as big of fans as I am, so I figured I'd grab you before the three of us started that way." He says excitedly, and Sapnap lets out an excited gasp.

"No shit?" He asks, and Quackity nods happily.

"Well what are we waiting for, lead the way!" Karl says with a grin, and Quackity does, barely waiting for Dream and George to catch up before starting in the direction of the booth, and then suddenly stopping.

Sapnap jogs up next to him and wonders if this is where the booth is, but looking around, he can't see the telltale green and black coloration of the band's stuff. "Quackity?" He asks, panic setting in as he finally catches a glimpse of the shorter's face.

Karl comes up next, looking concerned as he too picks up on the situation, and Dream and George aren't far behind, George fixing Quackity with a look of worry that Dream mirrors.

"Shit, *shit*, I thought he said he was done with Sunset!" Quackity says, backing up towards Sapnap who braces himself as Quackity bumps into him, sticking somewhat close to his side as a figure starts making their way towards the group.

He's tall, imposing, and has a swagger as he waltzes to the group, a large eerie grin on his face as he approaches them.

"Sugar Pumpkin! Been a while, huh?" The stranger asks, voice deep and saccharine sweet, boasting a light New York accent. Sapnap stays close to Quackity's side as he draws closer, finally pausing as he drags his eyes up and down Quackity in a way that feels oddly invasive.

"I thought you decided this place was too small-time." Quackity bites back, holding his own for now. The man laughs, cold and harsh.

"Yeah, well, people change, right? 'Sides, that was when I was solo, now I'm working with a group that's just right for this place." He replies, taking a sip out of a plastic cup filled with beer.

"Yeah? And who would want to be in a band with your sorry ass, huh *Schlatt*." His name is spit with venom, and Sapnap can feel the disdain Quackity holds for this person as the conversation

continues.

“Oh come on, I’m a talented guitarist baby, you forget, I’m sought after.” He replies with a wolfish grin that has Quackity curling in on himself, taking a small step back.

“Yeah, whatever, look, just fuck off, ok, I’m trying to enjoy my day before the competition.” Quackity eventually says, and Schlatt huffs out a laugh.

“You don’t even wanna know how I’ve been? I wanna know how *you’ve* been, you’ve got uh-” Schlatt’s eyes finally unfocus from Quackity and instead sweep across the rest of the group, his previously calculating look turning to one of pleased amusement. “Fucking Funky Boys, right?”

“*Feral* Boys.” Sapnap corrects, voice low. Schlatt waves a dismissive hand.

“Tomato, tomahto, you guys are *crazy* for being back, I’ll give you resiliency, holy shit.” He says in a backhanded compliment that has Sapnap’s gut curling angrily. “Ready to lose to Sleepy Boys again? Was 2 years in a row not enough? Ah, whatever, I’ll be honest, having so many bands with ‘boys’ at the end gets confusing. Makes you wonder what came first the chicken,” Schlatt motions loosely towards the group standing before him, taking a deep sip of his beer. “-or the egg.” He finishes, grinning wickedly as his hand switches to motion towards the grander festival, off towards a stage in the distance.

“We came first.” George says, stepping up from behind, eyes fierce and stance stiff. Schlatt fixes his attention on George lackadaisically and takes another low sip of his drink.

“Oh, did you?” The tone is pointed, and Sapnap watches George bare his teeth defensively, Dream coming up beside him to grab his hand and run a calming palm down his back. He reckons that’s the only thing keeping George at bay.

“Easy George, he’s not worth it.” George backs down, but Schlatt’s eyes widen with more mirth at the action.

“Oh, so *you’re* the rebound huh?” If George had been calmed before, he’s back to fighting fit as Dream barely manages to hold him back. Dream is surprisingly calm, perhaps trying his best to ease tensions for him and George alike. “Hmm I’d say Wilbur’s got you beat for attractiveness. You’re hot from the right angle, but he’s sexy from every side.”

Another pull of liquor from his cup, and a grimace as Schlatt realizes he’s running low.

“He is *not* a rebound.” George affirms, and Quackity takes the time to jump back in, stepping in front of George.

“Look, just leave us alone Schlatt, alright? Fuck off and suck Wilbur’s dick until the competition, or whatever it is you do these days, I’m tired of looking at your face.” He says, and Schlatt seems undeterred as he downs the last of his drink, swirling the cup around to gather any possible particles left before accepting the emptiness of his drink and lowering it to his side with a sigh.

“Oh yeah, how’s the apartment treating you? Forgot to ask.” And Quackity seethes, Sapnap too, angry on Quackity’s behalf as the pieces fall into place, and Sapnap realizes just who Schlatt is in regards to Quackity.

Karl is the one to reach out between the two, placing a careful hand on either of their shoulders to ground them.

“He’s no longer living there.” Sapnap replies, voice tight as he edges in front of the two, and

Schlatt's eyes trace over the hands on their shoulder's and the protective stance.

"Oh I see, we've got two sets of rebounds, who would've thought. Maybe your band name should be Rebound Boys or something, hah." Schlatt says, punctuating his sentence with a sharp laugh that has Sapnap's anger peaking. "Well, enjoy whoever's bed you've wormed your way into, I'm getting a refill." He brings his cup up to emphasize it's emptiness. "I look forward to seeing you lose Sunset again, but I think you'll find second isn't going to be an option this year." He says as he starts to walk away, pace alcohol ambled and uneven. "After all, my band'll be first, and you guys never finish above Sleepy Boys, which puts you third at the highest. See ya later boys, good luck, have fun, or whatever."

And with one last wave, the man disappears into the crowd, shielded by people filtering through the vendors, and seemingly vanishing further into the hall.

The five sit in quiet anger, Quackity practically vibrating under the hand Sapnap had placed on his shoulder, and George not much better off.

"How about we grab some food, the deep fried oreos smelled really good." Karl suggests, carefully pushing Sapnap and Quackity towards the exit of the vendor hall, motioning to Dream to follow.

Sapnap is too speechless with rage to do much other than let Karl lead them away from the hall, away from the crowds of people, and off towards the slightly quieter section of food vendors, setting them at a picnic table settled under a tree for shade as he goes off to purchase the food, bringing George with him and leaving Dream with Sapnap and Quackity.

"Sorry." Quackity eventually says, voice quiet and shaking slightly with anger. "I didn't think he'd be here."

Sapnap shakes his head at the same time Dream begins to reassure the lead guitarist. "No, no, it's fine, God, I just wanted to punch him right then." The blond says, finally vocalizing the anger Sapnap usually associates with him.

"I was surprised you didn't. The only reason I held back was because Karl reminded me where we were." He replies and Dream huffs out a sardonic laugh.

"Yeah, well, I was more focused on making sure George didn't commit second degree murder to worry about my own anger." He says, and Sapnap snorts.

"God, what an ass. I'm assuming he was your roommate?" He asks, and Quackity nods.

"And a lot more than that, at one point. But I am *not* ready to open that treasure chest yet, I'm still trying to enjoy myself." Quackity replies, and Sapnap doesn't push, nor does Dream as they let a brief silence sit between them.

"Well, we can use our anger to put more energy into our performance at the battle of the bands tonight." Sapnap says, trying to spin it as Karl and George approach from a distance. Quackity grins at him from across the picnic table.

"Oh fuck yeah, we're gonna make him eat his words, that's for sure." He says, and Dream nods from beside the shorter.

"I'm determined more than ever after that absolute little public jerk fest, what's his deal anyways?" Dream says, and Quackity shrugs as Karl slides next to Sapnap, George taking a spot between Quackity and Dream on the other side and placing the tiny cartons of deep-fried goodness on the table in front of them.

“Who fucking knows.” Quackity says, grabbing a deep-fried oreo and stuffing it in his mouth, swallowing before finishing his sentence. “All I know is we’re not gonna let that jackass ruin our day, and we are going to absolutely *demolish* him, and Wilbur, and Sleepy Boys, and *everyone* else.” He affirms, and the group cheer around mouthfuls of sickly sweet cookies.

“Damn right we will.” Sapnap replies with a wicked grin, good mood and determination revived as quickly as it had dissipated.

With the new vigor of fresh competition, their moods are elated in favor of previous anger and resentment, now focused on eating good food and enjoying themselves instead of the previous nasty encounter.

It feels nice, Sapnap realizes, to truly let himself enjoy the sights and scenes of Sunset like never before.

Chapter End Notes

Heehee, more tensions make for cooler competition, ok?

A reminder to hop over to [twitter](#) if you're interested, and if not, make sure to leave your kudos and comments (I reply to them all, and they make my day!)

Thank you all for the support as always, and I hope you enjoyed this chapter.

As always, I will see you next Sunday,
Cure :)

Can't Be Love

Chapter Summary

Food and festivities, with a side of nerves.

Chapter Notes

HELLOOO, ok, to all my non-twitter people, sorry for the delay on the upload, hit an insane amount of writer's block after chugging my newest fic out, so I decided it would be better to delay it a day. And technically, right now, it is still Sunday in several timelines. I borrowed [Pluto's](#) for today, thank you <3

If you haven't read her fics, definitely check them out for some amazing historical dnf

Ok, so, on that note, it's a perfect time to plug my [twitter](#), so you can catch any updates like this chapter being uploaded late!

Make sure to check out the [playlist](#) as well, they're all bangers, negl

I hope you guys enjoy this (late) chapter, but I hope the chunky word count makes up for it!

-

BETA'd once at midnight ha h

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

After the little run-in with Schlatt, the group manage to pull back their high spirits pretty easily, falling into the atmosphere of the festival and ignoring the tension growing as the sun creeps lower in the sky and the time ticks steadily on.

They catch the performances they want to, and spend way more than what's an appropriate amount of money, but it's a couple hours before the five reunite again.

It's coming on 5 o'clock when they finally re-meet in front of the vendor hall, each bearing the sheen of sweat from the hot temperatures and close quarters spent jamming to sets of pounding rock music. Their hair is mussed, and everyone is considerably more hungry, saying as such as they finally reconvene, bags stuffed with new merch from their favorite bands.

"God, Journey From Pluto were on FIRE today, they fuckin' rocked it!" Quackity exclaims as they start walking towards the food vendors, and Sapnap nods agreeably from beside him. While not his favorite group in the world, there was no denying they were talented, and had certainly performed quite well.

"Ok, but I can't believe the Sex Havers were performing, how did we not know?!" Karl exclaims, grabbing Quackity's arm as he references the band they had ditched Sapnap to watch.

Quackity had noticed the group's name on the timetable and had frantically called Karl, who had no less than sprinted over to Stage C (it was, apparently, closer to the Pavillion the Sex Havers were performing in). Apparently, neither had known one of their favorite bands would be performing, and when they had realized they were, had promptly left Sapnap alone at the Fireborn concert.

It had been, admittedly, endearing to watch them fanboy about a group so much, but Sapnap couldn't help but feel a little out of the loop as the two had rushed off so abruptly.

"God I *known*, like, thank god I noticed when I did, because we were so close to missing it." Quackity responds, angling his face slightly upwards to meet Karl's excited gaze.

"Yeah, thanks for ditching me so hardcore." Sapnap chimes in, perhaps a little salty. Quackity turns to him a bit sheepishly, and Karl flushes as well, looking away.

"Oh, yeah, sorry Sap, I just... God, Karl mentioned the group in the main chat once, and no-one acknowledged it, and so I ended up messaging him because like-" Quackity starts explaining, seemingly at a loss for words. Karl nods beside him.

"They're not really mainstream!" The brunette fills in, and Quackity giggles, motioning at him.

"Yeah, yeah, they're like... so small time I didn't think anyone knew-"

"But Q did!" Quackity nods, and Sapnap's slight disappointment leaves as he watches his friends become so passionate about this group, finishing each other's sentences as they bond even further, recollecting on past memories.

"Yeah! Yeah, of course, so like, naturally, we started fucking talking about them-"

"Totally *fanboying* about them-"

"Yeah, ok, that," Quackity says through another laugh. "And it, like, I dunno... became, like, a thing?" Karl nods enthusiastically beside him, practically curled into the shorter's side in a way that makes Sapnap wish he could wrap his arms around them both.

"Definitely." The smile the pair share is all soft and fond, and has Sapnap flushing second handedly from the sweetness in it. He opens his mouth to reply, to dissuade the two from thinking he still harbored any ill-feelings, but George cuts in before he gets the chance.

"I don't know what the three of you have going on, but I'm starved, and we've reached the food area, so what are we doing for dinner? Or, like, a snack until later or something." He asks, voice pointed from where he's stood next to Dream, resting his weight laxly against the blond's.

Dream is busy scrolling through his phone one handedly, the other tucked snugly around George's waist. Gross.

Quackity flushes, and Sapnap does too, wheeling to face George a little more squarely as Karl and Quackity do the same.

"I mean, we're here to eat junk, right? I'm thinking we get some good old fashioned hot dogs." Sapnap says.

"Oh yeah, I'm totally down for that. We've got to get fries from the Centennial Marching Band though, that's, like, their thing." Karl says, and the group share a nod of agreement at that mention.

“Ok, so is everyone down for hot dogs and fries? There’s a hot dog stand back that way, and the Marching Band stand is the other direction. We can split up, probably.” George says, and Dream tucks his phone in his pocket to nod.

“Yeah, makes sense. You three can grab the hot dogs and George and I can get the fries, Sap, you know what we want right?” Dream asks, and Sapnap nods, beginning to list the hot dog habits of his two friends.

“George, you’re getting yours dog piled in insane amounts of sauerkraut, and Dream, chili dog, right?” The two nod, and Quackity snorts from behind him.

“Of *course* you’re a sauerkraut dude.” He teases, grinning, and George raises a brow at him.

“What’s that supposed to mean?” The brunette challenges and Quackity chuckles.

“Nothing, nothing, I just... I dunno, you seem like someone who would put sauerkraut on their hot dogs.” The bassist says, not really adding much to his train of thought.

“Oh yeah? Well I’ll bet you put *coleslaw* on yours.” George quips back, and Quackity’s expression switches to one of bewilderment in an instant. George’s, meanwhile, flips to pleasant surprise. “No way.” He says through a stuttered laugh.

“How the *hell* did you guess that?” Quackity mutters back, and George just laughs, full bellied, making Sapnap grin.

“I dunno, you just *seem* like someone who would put coleslaw on their hot dogs.” George replies, putting on an exaggerated accent as he throws Quackity’s own words back at him, the younger clicking his tongue as he rolls his eyes, no real malice behind his actions.

“Whatever Kraut Boy, go get the fries, and make sure to get some malt vinegar.” He huffs, and George nods, still fighting off laughter as he drags Dream towards the fry stand.

That leaves the three of them left to grab hot dogs, and as Quackity grumbles lightheatedly about George’s odd ability to *perceive*, Sapnap gently herds the two guitarists towards the stand, pulling out his wallet to prepare for the purchases.

The gang meet back in front of the green where picnic tables have been spread out amongst a tree-covered area between two buildings. A small stage sits vacant at the front, reserved for the less musical shows and more performance based ones, a valiant attempt to draw in a wider audience that sometimes worked, and othertimes felt oddly forced at such a clealy targeted scene.

They grab a table before the dinner rush can send them searching for open building space to lean against or grassy patches sure to cover their pants in dry dirt, sorting their spread across old wooden boards as hot dogs are distributed and a large bucket of fries are sat smack dab in the middle.

Hungry hands wolf down processed meat and greasy fried potatoes, satiating the hunger from a day of walking and concerts and filling their bellies for a performance in only 2 hours.

They’re making their way steadily down the barrel of fries when Sapnap spots a familiar face searching for a seat, life-partner (or whatever he was) in tow, red hair unmistakable even in the slowly setting sun.

“Bad!” He calls out, grabbing the taller of the two’s attention, motioning towards the table that barely has room for one more, but Dream and George, ever hospitable under Sapnap’s pointed glare, squeeze together to allow the two new members to set their food and bodies at the table.

“Hey Sapnap!” Bad says cheerfully, grinning brightly, light glinting from the copious amount of jewelry shining from his ears and around his neck. His shoulders are flushed lightly from where they’re likely a bit burnt from the sun, the black turtleneck tank showcasing the older’s broad shoulders not doing much for solar protection, and Sapnap reaches over to nudge his shoulder in appreciation for the style.

“Hey Bad! Didja borrow something from Skeppy’s closet, hm?” He teases, and Bad groans, tugging at the neck of the shirt in embarrassment.

“Yeah, he convinced me I looked good in it, but I’m not sure.” He says, and the man next to him, dressed as stylishly as Sapnap always remembers him to be, scoffs.

“You look *fantastic* Bad, I don’t know what you’re worried about, because you look *hot*.” The lead guitarist of Bad’s band comments, and Sapnap grins as Bad looks away.

“Skeppy!” He exclaims, as a blush almost as deep as the color his fringe is dyed crawls up his neck.

“Good to see you guys.” Dream finally says, taking the attention off Bad, who relaxes almost instantly. George nods from beside him, and as Bad’s gaze sweeps to meet the blond, he seems to pick up on the two strangers sitting across from him.

“Oh! Hello Dream, are these two with you?” The brunette asks, motioning towards Quackity and Karl who had mainly spent their time continuing to eat from the dwindling stack of fries they’d laid out on a napkin.

“Yeah, this is Quackity and Karl, our new Lead and Rhythm Guitarists. They’ll be performing with us.” Dream explains, motioning to each in turn, and after the introduction Bad’s expression lights up as he extends a hand towards the two.

“Well hello there, I’m Bad Halo, these muffinhead’s friend. And this is Skeppy, my lead and roommate.” He introduces, both guitarists returning an easy grin and shaking his hand. Ah, so still questionably dating it seems, Sapnap thinks to himself.

Sapnap was half convinced Skeppy and Bad had gotten secretly married when they had gone on a surprise trip to Vegas one year a few summers back and simply hadn’t told anyone.

Even though he’s known Bad for so long, the older still keeps many secrets, reserved in his private life, regardless of how oddly open as he was in general.

“Pleasure to meet you, dude, and you too Skeppy. Love the hair.” Quackity says to the carefully dyed blue strands atop Skeppy’s head. The guitarist grins.

“Thanks man, it’s a bit of a trademark.” He says, and Quackity grins as they dap each other up in a new familiarity of quick friends.

“I agree! I’ve got to say though, I’m living for Bad’s nails, who’s the artist?” Karl chimes in, making conversation that has Bad easily impressed as he fans his fingers out towards Karl.

“Oh! Skeppy did these! Usually I just stick to normal black, but he wanted me to spice it up for Susnet.” The brunette wiggles his digits up and down a bit, and Sapnap lets himself observe the

simplistic yet funky pattern of aqua and deep red across each nail, different patterns and designs on each.

“Yeah, because you’re *boring*, these are so cool! You should let me paint them more often.” Skeppy replies, and Karl nods enthusiastically.

“You should! You’ve got a great sense of style, Skeppy.” The rhythm guitarist compliments, and Skeppy smiles back.

“I know.” He says, but the words hold no malice, and instead fall perfectly into the tone of the conversation, even making Karl giggle as Bad finally pulls back his hands to rest in his lap.

“Well, are you guys excited or what?” The taller of the pair asks, one hand raising to fiddle with the loose end of one of the silver necklaces dangling around his neck. Skeppy reaches out a hand to coax Bad’s away from toying with the metal, and Sapnap isn’t entirely sure the younger of the duo lets go.

“Absolutely man! God, I can’t wait for you to hear us Bad, we’ve been practicing so hard, and even in three weeks we’ve come so fucking far.” Sapnap jumps in, excitement pitching his tone as he continues. “Quackity is *wicked* on lead guitar, and Karl is *incredible* on rhythm, you’ve just got to hear them, it will be amazing!”

Bad’s proud look is enough to have Sapnap’s heart pounding excitedly, and he’s sure his eyes are shining brightly.

Bad, to Sapnap, represented everything great about rock music, and the community. He was in his own band called the Bad-Lands, a decently established group with himself on lead vocals and bass guitar, Skeppy on backup and lead guitar, a guy named Sam on drums, and finally, a friend of Bad’s, Antfrost, on keyboard.

For years, they too had performed at Sunset until they had done rather well, placing first and getting a decent gig opening for a band with some backing to their name. From there, they had released their first album, and had found success in several downloads and a reasonably streamed music video from a small, but supportive fanbase.

That combined with the success of Bad’s music shop made them a formidable, and recognizable name in the indie pop punk scene, that Sapnap always finds himself feeling indebted to when another opportunity is granted to them from Bad’s good word.

“I look forward to seeing it, Sappy.” His friend says, and it’s filled with the same fondness it’s filled with every year, that only genuine belief and support from years of friendship can provide. “Sleepy Bois really need to step down from the competition in my opinion, they’ve won the last two years, and I know they’re on the register this year too.” He says.

“It’s cause he’s waiting to see us lose.” George says, and Bad shifts his gaze back to the brunette who has effectively nestled himself into Dream’s side. Bad’s eyes flicker over the position, but he doesn’t ask.

“What do you mean?” Bad asks, frowning a bit. George shrugs.

“He doesn’t care about winning anymore, for him, it’s about watching us fail.” Sapnap groans.

“Gee, thanks for the mood lifter, George.” He mutters, and George sends him a pointed look.

“You know I’m right. It’s called being a realist.” George gripes back, and Sapnap huffs.

“Well be a realist somewhere else, please, we’re trying to build hype.” George does admittedly smile at the quip from the bassist, and seems to hold his tongue, leaning his head over Dream until brown hair falls in soft waves over the blond’s shoulders.

Sapnap spares a moment to send Dream a look he hopes conveys the message ‘Control him, please’, and prays his friend picks up on the subtle meaning behind the glance.

Dream just looks down sickly fondly at the drummer on his shoulder, and Sapnap fake gags.

“Topic shift, that’s new.” Skeppy comments, leaning across Bad to motion at Dream and George, easily bringing the tone of the conversation back to something far more light-hearted. Sapnap groans, resting his elbows on the table and cradling his head between them dramatically.

“God yeah, and it *sucks*.” He bemoans, and Quackity lifts a hand to rub circles into his back sympathetically.

“Can confirm. I’ve lived with them for two days and I’ve already walked into them canoodling in the kitchen.” Quackity follows up, and Sapnap catches his theatrical gaze of hurt in his peripherals. He stifles a laugh to keep the scene.

“We do not *canoodle*.” George calls angrily from across the table, and Sapnap lifts his head to raise a brow.

“You totally do.” He switches his focus back to Skeppy and Bad while Karl chews on a fry bemusedly. “They’ve been dating for all of 1 and a half weeks, and I’m already ready for the honeymoon phase to be over, Bad, Skeppy, when’s it over, *please* tell me.” He moans, and Bad smiles sympathetically at him.

“Well I always like to think it never ended.” He says, and Skeppy snorts from beside him.

“I like to think it never happened.” The shorter says, and Sapnap’s head snaps up so quickly he almost gets whiplash.

“So you guys *are* dating?!” He exclaims, gripe with Dream and George forgotten in far more interesting news. Bad fixes him with a mysterious smile and Sapnap groans again he realizes he’ll be getting no answer, head thunking uselessly back between his hands.

“A muffin never tells.” Is all the older says, and Sapnap glares at him.

“Oh poor Sapnap, you’ll be alright baby, just come into my arms!” Quackity says dramatically, voice high pitched and wailing as he takes on the role of what Sapnap can only assume is a concerned housewife.

He grumbles incoherently as he lightly shoves Quackity’s grabby hands off of him, eventually relenting as the lead gets his way, smothering Sapnap in tan limbs and exaggerated kissy sounds.

Karl laughs from somewhere behind him, and it’s not long before the brunette is joining in, skipping to Sapnap’s other side and mimicking Quackity’s movements with far less cohearency and far more giggles, until they finally relent, leaving Sapnap’s hair a mused mess.

Karl falls back to his seat and keels over into Quackity’s side as Sapnap remains sitting dejectedly at the table. He catches Dream’s eyes from across the way, and something oddly familiar and knowing glitters in the deep green of his friend’s gaze.

He pretends not to notice the way his gut twists as his heart moves faster than his thoughts.

“Ok, ok, I get it, it’s bully Sapnap day, can we *please* move on, look it’s-” He checks his phone. “6:30, we should really head back and start getting ready for the actual Battle of the Bands. We’ll need time to pack the van, get ready, and drive back.”

Dream mercifully nods, nudging George to sit back upright, the brunette grumbling as he loses his position against the lead singer but begrudgingly rights himself. “Yeah, you’re probably right.”

“You guys have fun! We look forward to seeing you perform, rooting for you guys as always.” Bad assures as the Feral Boys raise from their seats, gathering their trash and other items. Skeppy nods besides his partner as he plucks a fry from his own meal.

“Kick their asses.” The lead guitarist says, raising a fry in salute.

“Language, Skeppy!” Bad chides as Sapnap salutes back, following after Dream as they begin retreating towards the entrance, waving as they leave the table to Bad and Skeppy, just in time to see the other two members of their band approach. Sapnap smiles as he spots Anfro’s boyfriend too just before they’re out of sight and the rolling fields of cars are all that can be seen.

“Holy shit.” Quackity says as the sounds of the festival dim, and bass is the only perceptible noise from several different stages. “We’re literally going to perform soon.”

It hits Sapnap as much as it hits Quackity and he exhales a sharp breath of air he doesn’t remember holding.

“Yeah.” Is all he’s capable of saying as nerves mixed with excitement spark in his gut and the 5 load into his pickup once more, ready for the ride back and the performance of a lifetime.

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The van is loaded and the crew have taken over the bathroom at the studio, music playing from a bluetooth speaker as new clothes are donned and makeup is applied, the band preparing themselves for performance in a clustered group.

George hums loosely to the song filtering through the small space, ‘She’s Kinda Hot’ from 5SOS filling the bathroom with a lively mood as the drummer lines his eyes with dark smudgeproof liner.

In the corner, nail polish fumes nearly choke Sapnap from where Karl is carefully painting intricate designs onto Quackity’s nails, a small brush he had apparently brought with him just in case tracing careful lines onto their lead guitarists middle fingers.

Sapnap watches them fondly as Karl giggles at something Quackity says to him, indiscernible to Sapnap over the music and fan, and the brunette lifts his brush to avoid messing up the design.

Sapnap has already changed into his outfit, as they all had, and he admires himself in the mirror for a moment.

Black, skintight and wicker fabric wraps around his upper body and neck, the inky turtleneck contrasting sun-kissed skin and accenting the black nailpolish he’s refreshed on his nails, cleaning up the chips and runny edges to be show-ready.

His trademark white shirt, iconic flame decal rising from the middle, has been tucked into a pair of distressed black skinny jeans, decorative chains hooked into beltloops and accenting his sharp hipbone where the denim stretches over it.

A thick black belt sporting silver studded holes and a bright silver buckle is situated neatly around

his waist, and he tugs his hair into a ponytail as he moves on to makeup. He pulls on a silver headband to hold the flyaways back as he takes out his makeup pack, starting with his eyes.

He's not too big on makeup, but cannot deny the impact some detail around the eyes makes for showing up on stage incredibly well. Besides, eyeliner has always been a personal favorite of his to wear around, and sometimes, he'll even venture for a light eyeshadow look, imperceptible from too far away but adding an emphasis no one can refuse.

He pulls out his eye-shadow palette, a neutral one for the most part save for fiery oranges and a particularly glittery gold he feels is perfect for the occasion.

Sapnap starts with a smokey eye, blending out a black from a separate compact into the corner of his eyes before dusting on a light layer of orange, just enough to add some depth but not enough to show up obnoxiously. Finally, he takes a swipe of gold glitter powder on his finger tip to smear on the outer corners, rubbing it in furiously to add a sheen to his lids that brings perfect attention to the glittering deep blue of his eyes.

Next is shoring up the thin hairs above, a staple if he doesn't want to look browless on stage from so far away. He pulls out a deep black brow brush and thickens his brows, cleaning up the edges with a performance practiced hand, tilting his head either way as he makes sure they're even before packing the tool back into his kit.

And then it's his favorite part, the eyeliner, and he takes out his favorite wet and wild liquid liner, pulling himself up on the counter to get as close as he can to the mirror on the wall without fogging the glass. He takes a practiced hand to add sharp, short wings on the upper lash line before switching to a pencil liner to drag across his waterline, defining his eyes perfectly.

His eyes look sharp, pointed and dangerous, just how he likes them, and he grins wickedly at himself in the mirror before sliding down and turning around, meeting a lithe body topped by messy brown hair.

Karl stands before him brandishing a pencil eyeliner in one hand and a black smudged makeup wipe in the other.

"Help?" Is all he asks before Sapnap is chuckling fondly, moving out of the way and motioning towards the counter, taking the makeup tool from Karl and disposing of the wipe in the nearby trash can.

"Up." He says, and Karl obliges with a grin, popping up to sit on the porcelain between the sinks. "What kind of look do you want?" He asks.

Even though Sapnap's certainly the most proficient in applying eyeliner out of everything else, he's no beauty guru, and he waits patiently as Karl hums thoughtfully for a moment before perking up as he lands on a look.

"Something soft but kinda edgy." He says, like it's much help, but Sapnap figures he can work with it.

"Alright, I'll do my best. Hold still." He leans carefully into the rhythm guitarist's space, situating himself between the brunette's legs as he examines his eyes, lifting the small pencil to trace a round, upturned wing across the line of Karl's right eye, stepping back to admire the rough shape before deeming it satisfactory and repeating on the other side.

When both are roughly similar, he fills it in, dagging the pencil against soft skin as he holds his

breath to avoid assaulting Karl with his breath. It's not bad, freshly brushed, in fact, but Sapnap figures hot air that close to something as personal as Karl's face wouldn't be welcomed.

The guitarist's legs are warm on either side of him, even through thick, pale blue denim, and something about being this close to Karl feels intimate and precious. The taller's deep brown eyes track his hand as it drags the pencil over the lid and away, small hisses of air rushing out of the taller when Sapnap pushes a bit too hard.

"Sorry." He murmurs, continuing on his task.

He notes the colored eyeshadow the older has already layered on, the same shades as his eccentric sweater it seems he'll be performing in tonight, and is careful not to smudge the pre-existing eye work as he finishes the upper line.

He adds a bit of a smudge on the waterline, adding a darker, more grungy edge to the look that he hopes gives it the roughness Karl was describing. Sapnap steps back to admire his work, adding a bit more smudge to the left side before he deems it good, moving to step back from between Karl's legs, but they wrap around his upper thigh before he can as Karl drags him back in.

"Hey, thank you." Is all the brunette says with a smile that leaves Sapnap more than flushed, before abruptly letting go of his grip on Sapnap and hopping down to admire himself, leaving the bassist a mere moment to recover and back up.

A pleasant gasp echoes from the man in front of him, and Karl whirls around happily to face Sapnap once more. "It's perfect! Just like I asked!" He stops to throw arms around Sapnap, which the younger easily reciprocates. "Gosh, I'll have to have you do my eyeliner every time now."

"Or you could learn yourself." Sapnap says, but there's no real suggestion in his tone. Karl just shrugs before he's bounding off to grab something from his bag, and it's the bandanas Sapnap remembers from the truck.

"Ok, ok, seems like everyone's pretty ready so, bandana time! Sorry if you don't like your color, I tried to base it off of what your instruments kinda are." He says, sorting the strips of fabric. "Ok, so, Dream, you're obviously this nice green one, I looked at some old performances of you guys and saw you perform with a bandanna over half your face anyways, so I got the idea for this from there."

Dream takes his bandanna with a fond smile that has Sapnap feeling once again ever so grateful for the plucky rhythm guitarist. Dream, from where he's already applied his mainly identity concealing face paint of a ridiculous white smile, tests out the bandana in the mirror while Karl trucks on.

"George, you've got this red one I found, they were out of blue like your drums, but I think the red goes better with your look anyways. Blue would blend too much with your shirt." He amends, and George takes the bandana with some reverence before tying it onto his belt, a thick strip of bright red indeed contrasting nicely and bringing out the red rectangle design boasting the numbers '404' on his chest.

"Thank you, Karl." He says, accent lilting pleasantly, and voice sounding more genuinely thankful than Sapnap's heard in a long time. Karl grins at him before bounding up to Sapnap.

"Orange for you big boy, obviously." He hands over a flamebright orange and white bandana Sapnap immediately replaces the silver headband with, pulling out some strands of bangs to style. He grins at his reflection in the mirror before turning back to Karl, cheeks hurting from the affectionate smile he knows he holds, heart beating quickly for the rhythm guitarist.

“Thank you, Color Crush.” He says, voice sickly enamored. Karl snorts, moving to adjust the band lightly, fingers grazing Sapnap’s temple as he does so, before turning to the last member, the lead guitarist, who’d been sitting, back against a wall, watching the whole thing with soft eyes.

“Quackity~” Karl says, voice sing-songy in the otherwise quiet bathroom. Even the music croons a soft song, and Sapnap thinks it must be a paid actor.

Quackity grins at the taller as he approaches, holding out a deep navy and sunset gold square of fabric the guitarist takes and ties around his wrist without breaking eye-contact until it’s secure, the pair falling into giggles as their staring contest is finally broken.

Karl moves back to a more central position before pulling out his own bandana, a neat purple that he slides onto the opposite wrist than the one Quackity had attached his to. “Alright! That’s all I’ve got!”

The group chorus into another round of thank yous, and Karl flusters from the attention, preening in pride as bags are repacked and final touches are made before the group are ready, star-studded and looking at the door of the bathroom, waiting for someone to make the first move.

It’s George who does, brows furrowing in determination as he pushes the bathroom door open at long last.

“Let’s go *win*.” He says, and the 4 left cheer and whoop loudly as the door closes behind them, hollering sporadic lyrics to random songs as they trek to the van, sun setting peacefully as they begin the drive back to the competition, nerves pulsing alongside heavy adrenaline.

Sapnap knows they’re ready, and the soaring in his heart feels like a good omen as they jam wordlessly to classic tunes, saving their voices for the performance ahead.

Chapter End Notes

AH, I hoped you enjoyed, next chapter, THE COMP OFFICIALLY STARTS!!!!
AHHH

Ok, ok, reminder to follow me on [twitter](#) for updates about this fic and others, as well as a fun community, I post pretty frequently ;)

Make sure to leave your kudos and comments, I reply to them all, and thank you for the incredible support on this au as a whole. Hope this was an acceptable late chapter!
Love y'all, and see you next Sunday (for real)

-Cure

I Don't Like You

Chapter Summary

The boys watch their rivals and confront their past

Chapter Notes

Ok, so, belated again, but in my defense, I was busy all week and then my wife was acting up ;-;

HOPEFULLY, this won't happen again, BUT, in case it does, my [twitter](#) can keep y'all updated, so check it out ;)

I also want to take a moment to thank you guys for whatever happened last week, because WOW, the support was overwhelming in the best way! Waking up to almost 10 new followers over on twitter and almost 20 WHOLE COMMENTS on the previous chapter was just... wild and made my entire week.
So, thank you <3

I hope you guys enjoy this chonker of chapter (wow two chunky boys in a row 0.0)
Check out the [playlist](#) for this fic, as it really brings it to life, in my humble opinion.

As a note, the Sleepy Boys' discography is borrowed from a really neat pop-punk group I discovered called First and Forever, so make sure to give the original song and the band a listen, I'm such a fan of the Let This Love Lie Dead EP, it's crazy
akjshfkghs
The song they're performing is "Alone in the Dark" :)

Anyways, ENJOY

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BETA'd once, pray for meee

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Festivals at night have a different vibe to them, as the sun sets, spirits lift, and energy raises ten fold as performances reach new heights with light shows and incredible graphic displays.

When it comes to events like Sunset, it is always sure to be a different crowd as the sun goes down, a new sort of folk ready for the thrum of hard-core bands and expecting to get their full ticket's worth of shows.

After all, the big name groups are always saved for the later time-slots, guaranteed the larger stages as tech is carted in and out and pavilions become too provincial, a quote-unquote 'real' show sure to begin under the moon.

And while Wednesday evenings aren't exactly a 'hot-button' time, Sunset holds a reputation for spotting the up and coming at the Battle of the Bands, garnering attention from agents, other bands looking for openers, and crowds looking for a good time.

It was how the Bad-Lands had gotten their start, and how Sapnap could only assume the Feral Boys would get theirs, and as they roll up in their van, flashing their entrance passes to gain access through the back of the fair (a direct road to the large stage the bands would be performing on), Sapnap can only hope tonight would be their night.

Sleepy Boys Inc, although talented, had turned down most agents who had come up to them, at least to Sapnap's knowledge, and it left him wondering why the group would do such a thing if not to remain around the area to torment the Feral Boys.

Dream always tried to assert that it couldn't be the case, and Sapnap wanted to believe it wasn't, but George was gung-ho on the idea, and really, there seemed little other explanation.

In an attempt to keep themselves sane, they had avoided simply *asking* Wilbur, or any other Sleepy Boy, not exactly looking to have their suspicions confirmed, and certainly still far too heated to hold an unbiased conversation with the group.

So for now, they were left in the dark, waiting as George confirmed their entry in the competition and finally returned, holding a full schedule of the groups performing and more.

"We're after Sleepy Boys by a few groups, here's a stage layout. Since we're performing 'Turn it Up', we'll have them move the keyboard back since we won't need it, remember to tune beforehand, we've got a 5 minute performance time-limit, and I want none of it wasted on last-minute tuning." George begins, passing around the stage layout and specifications of the equipment. "Obviously, you three will have your own instruments, I might use some time to adjust the drums if they're off." He adds on, and Dream nods from where he's scrutinizing the set up.

"It's good we weren't using too many effects for our guitars, means we don't have to adjust much, hm?" The blond muses, and Sapnap nods.

"We've got the headphones in the van for tuning beforehand, make sure to use 'em, Q, Karl." Sapnap says, turning to the others and making sure they heard the information. "We've got about an hour before we're on, and I'm counting introductions and groups that run long. Unless it's an emergency, we're watching the entire show, and our competition."

Karl and Quackity nod, expression serious as Sapnap briefs them and finishes his own lookover of the schedule.

"But hey, most importantly guys, have fun." Dream says from over Sapnap's shoulder, reining in the attention of the rest of the group. He holds his hand out in front of him, black nails and ring-covered fingers holding the attention of 4 pairs of eyes.

Sapnap grins, placing his own hand on top of slightly tanner skin, matching painted fingernails criss-crossing over his best-friend's.

Hesitantly, pale skin comes to rest on top, George's slender fingers pressing coolly against otherwise heatflushed skin. The 3 share a brief look amongst themselves before opening the circle, facing the other two standing to the side.

"Come on, we're a group now." Sapnap says softly. Quackity and Karl share a brief look before Quackity is resting his palm against the back of George's hand, Sapnap taking a moment to look

over the art Karl had placed on the guitarist's nails before the brunette is placing his own hand on top.

The weight of the other's palms on his own feels like a homecoming, a moment they'd all been waiting for subconsciously. All 5 of their eyes flick back to the stack in front of them before Dream's beginning the phrase Sapnap's heard in so many other instances at so many other times, with different hands, and different positions, but always together.

And while members have come and gone, and maybe one day, so would Quackity and Karl, for now, they are here, and they are together, and they have a competition to win.

"Who are we?" Dream asks, and Sapnap and George take the lead to respond, Quackity and Karl falling into place behind them.

"Feral Boys!"

"I said 'Who are we?'" Dream's voice rings clear once more, overpowering the din of chatter in the background as their focus holds on just their lead singer.

"FERAL BOYS" The response is in perfect unison this time, near shouted across the patch of grass they're parked on, and Dream lifts his hand from the bottom coaxing the others to break, palms raising towards the sky as they finish their shout.

They walk towards the van, unpacking guitars from cases as they begin preparation for the night, checking, tuning, and fixing looks in the side mirrors.

The time between pre-preparation and the show being called to a start is always a specific mix of nerves and pent up energy while there's little to do and still too much all at once.

Everything feels too prepared, and yet Sapnap catches George running over his notes and triple checking everything, *quadruple* checking everything, and he can't blame the drummer.

He too is running chords in his head, pulling out problem areas he's long resolved and going over the fingering just in case. One couldn't be too careful, and he notices Quackity doing the same.

Upon first glance, he would say Karl was the most relaxed, followed by Dream, but knowing them both, the strange quiet they hold, the tense set of their jaws is similar in giving away their own stress.

Sapnap notes the similarities in their coping, but notes the differences as well, how Karl's quiet and contemplative look is far different to the usual bold and spontaneous behavior showcased in practice.

But where Karl's silence is strange, Dream's is only somewhat out of the ordinary. The vocalist is already a quiet person, but his silence here holds a different weight. Where normally it's thoughtful and observational silence, now it's downturned brows and a slight frown.

Sapnap can only assume lyrics are floating through his head as time counts down to the opening of the competition, even if he knows the older's got them down pat.

For George, the stress manifests in meticulousness, checking and re-checking, nitpicking at other's instruments and his own, even if he wasn't going to be using his drum set.

Stress for George finds itself in scanning over the schedule of bands, and, Sapnap notes curiously, seems to be a shared trait between the drummer and Quackity.

He notices when George picks up the list to review again, Quackity drifts over, Ibanez hung loose over his shoulder and fingers fiddling with the pickup selector switch. George will silently tilt the piece of paper in the lead guitarist's direction and the two will scour the list as though they could manifest the performances early.

He smiles to himself as he takes a swig of water and lets the time pass, swinging his eyes across the others vans and cars parked in the backstage area.

Bands from the previous group are leaving, but where one vehicle disappears, another slides in, as the next wave of performers take over. Sapnap is looking for a few people in particular, but he can't spot anyone he's looking for yet, and soon enough, the announcement for the show officially starting begins to clear over the field.

Sapnap takes in a slow breath, closing his eyes as he lets himself feel the air and listen to the sounds, flooding his senses with *sunset, sunset, sunset*. Fried food, the buzz of overhead lights, shouts from other groups, grass crunching under gentle feet as a fleet of artists walk towards a stage that might just hold their future.

A gentle hand grounds him, eyes fluttering back open as George stands beside him.

He catches Dream leading the other two guitarists ahead of them, off to find a seat in the artist's wing, and now, it's just him and George.

"Well." Is all the older says, and Sapnap huffs fondly, turning to look at George after a moment.

"We're here, yeah? Again?" A gentle breeze carries across the field as bodies push past.

"Yeah. But it feels different." The brunette says, accent lilting with the wind. Sapnap nods. It *does* feel different.

"Because we've got a good team." He replies, and catches the ghost of a smile on George's face.

"Maybe even a great one." This time, it's Sapnap's turn to grin, switching his gaze towards the field the other bands are filtering towards as George's hand slips off his shoulder and he moves forward too. "Come on, Dream can only hold us a seat for so long."

So Sapnap follows, after his drummer, in some ways his leader, and in all ways his friend.

They find Dream, Quackity, and Karl fending off groups from stealing the space they've managed to reserve, and squeeze in beside the three, greeting the others pleasantly with handshakes and hellos.

Sapnap ends up side to side with Quackity, the shorter wrapping an arm around Sapnap in an awkward side hug he accepts. Quackity's arm remains around his shoulder, warm and space conserving in the already small wedge between him and the next person.

He assumes that's the motive for the gesture, and settles against the guitarist's side as the lights onstage dim and flash multicolor, the host of the evening coming out on stage to officially bring the competition to a start.

As an announcer voice comes over the PA, the crowd roaring as the competition is introduced and the first group is brought on to set up, the true feelings of a band competition settle in and Sapnap lets himself relax into the sway of rock music and the overwhelming flashes of gels on spotlights

and lasers programmed to pick up the beat.

It's familiar in the way that music connects people, and groups pass by with unremarkable, but not necessarily bad performances one by one. Where bass thrums and guitars pitch and play, where noise feels all too much and yet never enough, and Sapnap itches to turn up the volume even more.

He lets himself enjoy the songs, recognizing most but as a familiar face comes onto stage around 5 groups in, brown hair slicked back and accompanied by two other figures, Sapnap feels Quackity stiffen next to him, and he too finds himself rudely grounded.

"*Schlatt*." The lead guitarist whispers, almost indiscernible above the enthusiastic screams save for the fact that Sapnap is right next to him.

"Do you know who he's with?" He asks, squinting to make out the others, one situating himself behind a set of drums and the other cradling the neck of a guitar. Quackity shakes his head.

"I didn't know many of Schlatt's friends, but they're no-one I recognize." The guitarist says, and Sapnap grunts.

"Must be entirely new then. Wonder how they put up with his ass." That gets a small smile out of Quackity whose gaze has turned to lock onto the stage in quiet observation.

"Next on stage, help me welcome Chuckle Sandwich, an up and coming group ready to take the scene by storm!" The host announces.

"Chuckle Sandwich? That's dumb." Quackity says with a snort, and Sapnap nods as he watches Schlatt warm up with a couple licks on his electric.

With a call from their drummer, now illuminated in the stage lights and more clearly a young man boasting black, thick framed glasses on a face swamped with slime green dyed hair, the music starts.

Schlatt heads the song, the first chords warped but recognizable as a classic song from Punk Rock history.

"What the hell, all that talk and they're doing a cover?!" Quackity exclaims as the crowd begins jumping to the familiar beat of Limp Bizcuit's 'Rollin'.

It holds a different tone to it, though, and instead of a carbon copy of the iconic pop punk sound, it's made uniquely theirs.

Guitar riffs are added, warped, callbacks to other songs and other artists all together are fit into solos in a way that Sapnap must admit leaves him slightly floored.

If he didn't have such a strong prejudice against the guy (for good reason too), he might have found himself jamming along, enjoying the unique spin on an iconic work.

From a purely objective standpoint, yes, they are *good*, and have somehow managed to make something as simple as a cover of a song feel original and timeless, filling the stage and crowd with high energy and a fun twist on an old classic.

And Schlatt is *good* on guitar. He certainly hadn't lied about that. He's executing guitar riffs that took Sapnap years to understand and that he had ultimately given up on. Not for lack of trying, but sheerly for lack of interest in electric and his higher interest in bass.

But seeing Schlatt execute the moves he had ultimately stopped pursuing fills him with quite some jealousy.

The group surrounding him is also pretty good, despite Schlatt's claims of them being small-time, and the way the group functions has each instrumentalist singing at different parts in the song, mainly surrendering the vocals to their drummer.

His voice is unique, energetic, and sounds quite similar to the band who's song they've borrowed, and yet, distinctly his own.

*We got the gang set
So don't complain yet
24/7 never begging for a raincheck
Old school soldiers passing up the hot shit,
That rock shit,
And bounce in the mosh pit*

And indeed, the crowd is into it, and Sapnap can't blame them. Quackity beside him, however, is seething.

"Motherfucker. He's actually putting up a fight." That gets Sapnap's attention as the song continues and their Bassist gets his lines, growling out the iconic *Keep rollin', rollin', rollin'*.

"What, you mean he's not usually this... enthusiastic?" Sapnap asks as he watches Schlatt and the drummer trade lines.

*Move in now move out
Hands up, now hands down
Back up, back up
Tell me what you're gonna do now
Breath in, now breath out
Hands up, now hands down
Back up, back up
Tell me what you're gonna do now*

"Definitely not! He's usually like... complaining the whole time. Or half-assing it. Or drunk." Quackity replies, voice flat, and Sapnap watches the man on stage curiously, almost not believing it save for the fact that he had seen Schlatt before the performance and he had fit Quackity's description better.

"I'm starting to think he's got some people to keep him on a leash now." Sapnap replies, and Quackity scoffs.

"Good luck. If they can do it, they can have him, God knows I don't want to be at the other end of it." Quackity replies as the group pull their performance to a close, and the ad-libbed guitar solo at the end finishes out the song to a resounding applause.

For just a cover, Sappnap knows this performance will definitely be one to beat for its creativity and fantastic execution. Original pieces get more of a bonus for being entirely self-produced, the judges acknowledging the work that goes into song-writing, and therefore judging them higher than something like a cover of a pre-existing song.

However, not only did Schlatt's group execute a cover incredibly well, they made it half of an original by doing a remix, taking suggestions from the source material, rather than using it as their core, and transposing it into something entirely new.

That will do well, Sappnap reckons.

"So. He was kinda good." George says, and Sappnap sighs as the brunette clearly can't read the room. Quackity groans, rubbing his face with his hands.

"I hate that you're right." The lead says, and Karl places a palm on Quackity's back soothingly. "I haven't seen him that animated on stage since... ever."

"It'll make it more satisfying when we beat him." The brunette offers as consolation, and Quackity fixes Karl with somewhat of a miserable look.

"If we beat him." He replies.

"Oh, we'll beat him." George says confidently from next to Dream. 4 eyes turn to him and his confidence, surprised.

"Why the hell are you so confident in that?" Quackity asks, frowning slightly. George returns his looks with a shrug and pointed glare.

"I don't *know*, but surely having *some* faith is better than calling defeat so early." The drummer says, and Quackity's expression shifts to one of contemplative admittance of the older's correct words.

"Since when are you the optimist?" Sappnap quips back, and George's glare shifts to him.

"Since you all decided to become pessimists." And Sappnap can't argue with that logic. He shifts his attention back to the stage as the next group comes on, catching Dream's amused look as he does, and lets the licks of the electric guitar lift his mood once more.

The rest of the music is easy to fall into, a far more amicable rivalry present instead of the bitter air of salty competition. There are some good groups, some to keep an eye on, and some that Sappnap wonders what they're even doing.

He, and the others, have pretty much recovered from Schlatt's performance, but as the next name is announced, hackles are raised and moods shift to high alert.

"...Back for a third year, and our reigning champions, Sleepy Boys Inc, presenting a new formation as they hope to win for a third year in a row!"

A new formation? Sappnap meets Dream and George's equally confused looks as the four-member group traipses onto stage, and indeed, instead of Wilbur taking the familiar helm at the microphone at the front of the stage, he steps off to the side, and instead, the previous rhythm guitarist and backing vocalist, takes the front microphone.

“What the hell? They’re letting the kid take over lead vocals?” Sapnap murmurs as the group go through a short warmup.

“Why would Wilbur step down from that position?” George comments, and Sapnap shrugs as he watches messy blonde hair sit atop limbs far too long and lanky wrap around the head of a Fender.

“Who knows. Might work out for us if the kid isn’t great. He’s the youngest, right?” Dream asks, and George nods.

“Newest member too. It was his first performance with them last year, so I don’t know much about him unlike Phil and Techno.” George follows up as the group begins their song, Philza playing a rapid rhythm on the drums before Wilbur is jumping in with guitar as the vocals start.

Unfortunately for them, the kid is *good*. His voice is crisp as he sings the opening lines and keeps time with his guitar too, and Sapnap recognizes Wilbur’s clear craftsmanship in the lyrics and flow of the song.

Still there’s something about the passion with which the lead vocalist is singing that leads Sapnap to believe Wilbur wasn’t the only one involved in the writing. If this kid was so good, why had they kept him on backing vocals only last year?

Questions spin through Sapnap’s head as the group tears it up on stage, the crowd coming to life with poetic lyrics and energetic playing.

*Hey there
I’m underwater again
There’s nowhere
We’re all dead in the end*

*I swear
I’m trying as hard as I can
But I can’t hold on forever*

As the song picks up pace, so does the band, Philza rocking it on drums as always, green and white flashing multicolor as the lights pulse in rhythm, and Technoblade carrying the deep bass from his own place on stage.

Wilbur is watching the lead vocalist, who Sapnap almost feels ashamed for not knowing his name, with a watchful eye, but one that glimmers with pride.

If Sapnap hadn’t been so hurt by the lead guitarist in the past, he might have found himself cheering them on, or interested in the group, wanting to know more.

Because the song is *good*, something Sapnap knows would find its way onto his playlist and that he could easily blast at ungodly hours of the night. But regardless of its clear quality, it’s the *principle* of the band, and particularly their songwriter.

So while the crowd around him eagerly leaps up and down at the debut of a new song from the group, Sapnap, and the rest of the Feral Boys find themselves swamped in nerves from the clear quality of their competition.

*Nothing you could ever say
Would bring my old self back to me
And if you care
Here I’ll stay*

Alone in the dark with a hand grenade

And their lead singer is *really* into it, dancing around the stage as far as he can with the mic still picking him up, and it's clear the crowd is *loving* it as the song dwindles down and Wilbur leads them out with a fading echo of guitar, crowd going wild.

The lead vocalist is the most ecstatic of the group as they finish, leaping up and around, particularly approaching Wilbur with a wide smile and bright eyes, skin flashing multicolored as the lights swirl around, and his age, and youth, in comparison to the rest of the group is clear.

Sapnap wonders how someone as talented and energetic could end up with someone like Wilbur. He figured the boy deserved better, despite his clear contentness on stage with the rest of the group.

The four of them walk off the stage herded by Philza, whose fond smile Sapnap can pick up even from their place in the wings, and he swears he can hear the youngest too, shouting excitedly at their performance.

"Come on, we're going to talk to them. I want answers." George's voice calls, cutting Sapnap from his muses.

"What? George, are you crazy?" He calls as the brunette starts to cut through the crowd and Dream begins to follow hopelessly after.

"No, it's been a long time coming, and I want *answers*." He hisses back, and Sapnap groans.

In previous years, they'd gone out of their way to avoid talking to Wilbur and his group, often too ashamed of their own performance that year or simply not ready to face him after all that time, but for some reason, this performance had been the straw to break the camel's back.

Sapnap just motions helplessly for Quackity and Karl to follow, who exchange a look before nodding and darting through the crowd after Sapnap, off towards the wings where the bands exit the stage.

Wilbur and the rest of the group are holding a small conversation with the group going on after them, chatting idly when George stalks up to Wilbur, and Sapnap barely manages to catch up and place a hand on the drummer's shoulder holding him back.

"Hang on, we're not trying to get eliminated, so get that murderous look out of your eye." He reprimands, taking the brunt of George's anger as the brunette swings around to glare at him. Sapnap glares right back until George relents, easing the tension in his shoulders as the group approaches Wilbur far more calmly.

"Wilbur." George calls out, and the leader of the Sleepy Boys seems surprised to hear his voice, pausing his conversation immediately to address George.

"George. What a pleasant surprise, I had figured you'd avoid me this entire festival too." Wilbur replies with an easy smile that has George back on high-alert. Sapnap places a heavy hand on his shoulder as a reminder once, and George stands down ever so slightly.

"Will, is this the guy?" The young vocalist behind him starts, and Wilbur lifts a hand to calm him.

"Yes, Tommy. Go with Phil and Techno for right now, ok? I need to have a chat in private." The boy- Tommy -nods and sweeps his eyes across the group once before scurrying after the other two band members, Phil ruffling his hair affectionately before the three pass by Sapnap and head out to

the audience, leaving just Wilbur.

“What did you tell him?” George asks, and Wilbur smiles, soft and slow.

“What he needed to know.”

“And what’s that?” George demands, Wilbur shrugging.

“Depends on what he needed to hear.” He replies, and Sapnap feels his own annoyance rising at the lack of a detailed answer. “Why are you suddenly talking to me? I thought we weren’t on speaking terms.”

“We *aren’t*. I just... what *was* that?” The drummer says, voice pointed. Wilbur drops his head with an amused huff before raising his eyes back to the group.

“You’ll have to be more specific. A lot happened out there. We were experimenting all over the place.” He says, and this time it’s Dream that speaks up.

“Your new vocalist. Why did you step down?” The blond asks, and Wilbur tilts his head contemplatively.

“Oh yes, that’s part of why we came back this year. We weren’t going to, you know, the whole winning twice in a row. Phil said it would be overkill to come back again, but after we switched Tommy to vocals, I convinced him to give it one more year.” The guitarist explains, switching his gaze to focus on the figures of Quackity and Karl behind the trio. “And it seems I was right to return. I had a feeling I wouldn’t be the only one bringing a surprise. My only question is how long yours will last.”

George growls, but it’s Quackity who speaks, voice even and confident as he moves towards the front.

“We’re here to stay, ok? We know all about you and your little jackassery, so I’m not going anywhere.” Wilbur’s expression is bewildered, but amused.

“Oh, interesting. They’re certainly the first additions you’ve had that have formulated an opinion on me. What did you tell them?” He asks, voice low and taunting.

“The truth.” George says, and Wilbur hums.

“*Your* truth.” He corrects, and George scoffs as Wilbur laughs softly. “I just mean to say truth is arbitrary. You never really asked my side.”

“You never offered it. And you deleted my number and removed me from all social media before I could ask.” George retorts, and Wilbur lowers his head as he huffs a small laugh.

“Ah, right.” He lifts his head and fixes George with a lackadaisical grin. “Sorry about that, nothing *really* personal, I’ve just always had a flair for the dramatic. I like to see myself as a changed man these days.”

“A changed man?” Dream echoes, not believing it, and Sapnap can’t blame him. Wilbur shrugs.

“More or less. My past is... spotty.” He flashes another cheshire grin. “And what happened to our little rag tag group is... a true tragedy.” Wilbur adds on and George scoffs and rolls his eyes. “No, really!”

“So how come you never tried to fix it?” Sapnap asks, and Wilbur looks away.

“I suppose we were past that. Let bygones be bygones and so forth.” The vocalist says with a frown. “We just... weren’t going to work out.”

“Funny how they all say that.” George replies. “But usually they don’t lie about band life not being for them.”

Wilbur chuckles.

“Apologies. If it’s any consolation, I truly didn’t see myself joining a group after you two.” George glares at him. “Ah but... right people, right time, and Tommy is just a *brilliant* artist, isn’t he? Even helped write some of that song.”

So Sapnap had been correct on that front.

“Anyways, I’m of the opinion we should just let things go, after all, once Sleepy Boys win this Sunset, it won’t matter anyway, we’ll be on to greater things.” He says, and Sapnap scoffs as George leads the conversation again.

“Are you joking?” He says, and Wilbur fixes him with a confused look.

“No. Why would you think I was?” The vocalist replies, and it’s Karl who speaks up.

“Because you’re literally not putting any effort into resolving anything? You left these guys high and dry and told them it was because you wanted to go solo, only to show up with two whole other members in tow at the competition you had left them to fend for themselves on!” He exclaims. “And to add insult to injury, even after you win, after you *beat* them, you return next year to do the same thing with a brand new member!”

Wilbur regards Karl interested as the rhythm guitarist goes on his rant.

“How you think under any circumstance it’s ok to just... leave people like that I don’t understand. At least be respectful enough to *actually* break it off before you just... leave!”

“Mm, you really *did* tell them everything, hm?” Wilbur pauses then shakes his head. “No, not everything. But most of it.”

Karl’s eyes flick momentarily to George but he doesn’t push.

“Look, I’ll be honest: I’m tired. Of this conversation and of your new little backup players. Long story short, our group never clicked. We just weren’t *going* anywhere. So I lost interest. These guys? They’re different. To me, at least. Nothing’s going to change that I just *click* better with them. Sorry.” Wilbur says halfheartedly, already turning to leave.

“What have you told them.” George asks, accepting his defeat of getting proper closure. Wilbur pauses. “*Your* truth.”

Wilbur pokes his canine with his tongue through a wolfish grin as he looks at the ground and back up to George. “As much as they need to know.”

Sapnap feels the same frustration from earlier well up in his stomach.

“Best of luck, boys, I look forward to beating you for a third and final time. Sorry it had to end the way it did, but c’est la vie. See you on the other side. It’s better this way.” Wilbur says as he

waltzes past the five.

He's about to disappear in the crowd before George calls his name out once more, Wilbur pausing right before the threshold.

"Wilbur. Do you ever regret us?" George asks. "I don't just mean the band."

Wilbur's shoulder's tense up and then release before he throws back a look to George, basking in an array of bright lights and colors from the performance on stage.

"No. I don't *regret* it. It was just... never meant to be."

And with that, he fades into the crowd, leaving the five behind in awed, tense silence.

George swallows hard.

"Let's go, we have a competition to win." He says, voice filled with a new, raw determination as he leads the group back towards the audience to wait for their time to perform, competition swirling in Wilbur's wake as the crowd grows louder and bass thrums through Sapnap's heart.

Chapter End Notes

BAM, next up PERFORMANCE CENTRAL! Will the Feral Boys managed to overcome their enemies? Find out next week!

Hope you guys enjoyed, make sure to check out my [twitter](#) for updates and super fun content, and OF COURSE

Leave your kudos and comments (I reply to them all), they make my day <3

Hope you guys enjoyed, and see you next week!

-Cure

Revolution

Chapter Summary

The boys perform and awards are given... will the Feral Boys end up on top?

Chapter Notes

HELLO EVERYONE, guess who's actually on time, eh?

And with a nice big chapter, filled with hella content, and giving you more than what was originally planned...

Hopefully, this chapter satisfies everyone, cause I had a great time writing it, so enjoy!

Make sure to follow me on [twitter](#), we're almost at 200 followers (which is.. absolutely wild, thank you), and I'm running a fun 'most liked reply will get written' in celebration!

Also check out the [playlist](#), banger songs on there, let's go.

And now, I will let you enjoy!

-

BETA'd once, let's go? Let's go.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

When they're called on deck, Sapnap swears his heart skips a beat. The 5 make their way over to the side of the stage, where managers shuffle around, ask if they need anything specific for their performance, and rush to note it down.

George takes the lead, he often does in these times, leaving Sapnap, Karl, and Quackity to grab their instruments, last minute tuning necessary from the humid summer air as cords twang into the stillness of the backlot.

There's mainly silence, odd from Quackity's end, and Sapnap's too, but the nerves the bassist knows are swelling through his bandmates (and himself) are paralyzing, as they so often are.

"Hey, so, I know we did this in practice, but just to double check, for the lead in for the chorus, it's this chord right?" Quackity's voice comes from over Sapnap's shoulder. He turns to face the lead, looking at his fingers, noticing the slight quiver in them as they rest against the strings.

"Yeah, looks right." He assures, because he knows that Quackity is very confident on the chords and is only really asking for double assurance catalyzed by double-guessing. "You're good, Q."

Quackity nods, switching his fingers between the chords before and after as they finally start walking back towards the side stage.

From the distance, bass still pounds, and the crowd cheers loud, echoing around the back of the stage in strange arrays of soundwaves that seem only to exacerbate the pounding in Sapnap's chest.

It's not all bad, no, some is quite positive, excitement practically radiating off the bassist as they rejoin with Dream and George, and while Sapnap would consider himself a seasoned performer, the stakes seem so much higher with the strong competition between not one but two bands this year.

So as the group before them comes to a close, sound waning as the announcer comes to introduce the next group, the true realization that *it's time, it's now* is the only thing roaring in his mind.

It's pretifying, *electrifying*, all-consuming, and Dream's hard clap on the bassist's shoulder brings him back from his deafening mind.

"Alright Feral Boys. This is it. Our time to shine." The blond starts, and the group gather around to listen as he continues his brief speech. "We've practiced for this, and we're *ready* for this, so no stress, have fun, and give 'em hell." He finishes with a grin that Sapnap watches melt some of the stress mounting on his bandmates. "Who are we?"

"FERAL BOYS!" Dream grins at the enthusiastic calls from all members, as energy hypes and the announcer finishes their words.

"That's right. So let's make 'em say our name." The five holler as they follow Dream on stage, greeting the audience with waves and bright smiles as they take their places, George behind drums, Karl diagonal from him and Quackity barely a few steps to the side of Dream. Sapnap is placed a little ways behind the two leads, almost directly across from Karl on the other side.

Dream struts up front, grabbing the mic and adjusting it towards his height, tapping on the grill before speaking a brief "Testing... testing, alright." as speakers click from newly plugged in guitars.

Quackity is the first to strum a quick chord, Ibanez shining in the bright lights as the sound echoes around the stadium, Karl joining in with some brief rips a few moments later.

The guitarists take a moment to adjust their mics as Sapnap plucks some bass in an improv melody that brings a particular shriek from further in the crowd. Sapnap grins as he plucks a bit more, eyes searching the mass of faceless people, scanning despite blinding spotlights shining on him.

All he knows in this moment are cheers, hype from the audience before they even begin, and it's *infectious*.

"Well hey there everyone." Dream finally says. "We'll keep this brief so you can hear what we've got for you tonight sooner rather than later,"

Quackity strums a particularly loud chord, grinning cheekily at Dream who sends him a dramatically unimpressed look. "That is if our lead can let me finish."

"Oh sure, go on." Quackity teases back into his own mic. Dream just chuckles and rolls his eyes.

"Well, we're the Feral Boys, and we're gonna perform an original piece by us here tonight, so without further ado, I think it's time to Turn it Up."

George calls out a beat before the whine of guitar leads the intro, Karl taking the lead before drums take charge and bring 'Turn It Up' to life, rhythm and melody blending in a perfect mix of energy and sound.

Quackity joins in with rapid strums from his lead not a measure later, and Sapnap takes his cue to enter with his own instrument, bass reverberating through the speakers in perfect support for the song as Dream enters.

His voice is crystal clear, annunciation on point as the lyrics float through the cheering crowd and music becomes harmonious with the roar of their audience.

*Have you ever even been in love?
Have you had that taste?
Ever felt that touch?
Is it true?
You thinkin' what I'm thinking of?
Every time we chase
It's just not enough*

The lead into the chorus comes quick, clean, and led by Quackity whaling on his guitar, working the crowd as he jumps around on stage, only returning to his microphone to provide support for the vocals.

He's wild, free as the chains hanging loose on his waist follow a beat behind his movement, painted nails stark against the neck of his Ibanez as his fingers slide up and down in time.

Sapnap's almost worried his beanie will fall off as he takes every instance to jump and move, inspiring Karl on the opposite side of the stage to do the same, moving rhythmically in the closest they'll get to dancing.

And because when Quackity brings the music to life with erratic movements as far as his instrument will allow Dream follows, Sapnap watches their lead singer come to life under flashing colored lights.

He's using the full rein of the black cord attached to his mic as he struts to and fro across the stage, crouching to run his hands across the front row of audience before leaping back up as the chorus starts.

Turn it Up! croons through the microphone as Dream returns to his stand, hands emphasizing lyrics, jumping as all of the vocalists shout through the mic.

Louder

I want it louder

C'mon let's just turn it up, I'm turning to you

*Turn it up **louder***

*I want it **louder***

Dream lifts his hands, encouraging the audience's cries at the *C'mon, c'mons*, and the crowd responds, voices carrying further across the stage and moving in rhythm, clearly jumping in place, even from the blurred view on stage.

It's infectious, and spurs Sapnap forward, as they finish off the chorus, Dream still leading the audience forward alongside the song even as they take a brief instrumental break before heading into verse 2.

By the second time they're entering the chorus, any nerves Sapnap had had disappear as they repeat the lyrics from earlier, Quackity even coming down from his mic to squeeze in beside Sapnap on his as they support Dream.

They're back to back, and Sapnap can't help but think of practice, back to a moment just like this.

But where the studio had held silence save for their playing, the stage in front of them holds so much *more*, energy and chaos and *vibrations* unparalleled as sweat soaked back meets sweat soaked back under broad spotlights.

They're cheek to cheek once more before the chorus is finished and Quackity's gone in a flash, leaving Sapnap to grin after him as the lead returns to his place adjacent to Dream and they transition into the break where their vocalist takes his place at the mic to speak a bit in the off time.

"How we feeling tonight Sunset?" Dream calls as Karl takes the lead on rhythm, repeating the chords as the vocalist continues. "Good? Good! We're loving the energy you're giving us, and we would love it if you guys could help us with this last chorus...Sound like a plan?" The cheers are deafening, and Sapnap can picture Dream's satisfied smile in return at the positive response. "Yeah? Awesome, shout what you know, or just shout, we love you either way, Quackity, take us home!"

Quackity hammers the riffs before the final chorus enters, Dream returning to singing the last of the song, and the audience joining in with shouts almost in unison.

It's magical, the shouts of the crowd almost overpowering Dream and the music as they shout the easy to remember melody and words, the 'Louder!'s taking on a new dimension of 'loud', exemplifying the message of the song in the best way.

Sapnap knows he'll be nursing a wild headache as they return home, but he can't bring himself to mind as the audience scream everything and anything, a loose amalgamation of words forming the outline of what could be considered the lyrics in a perfectly organized chaos.

C'mon, c'mon
Shut me up, hold me down, blindfolded, turn around
Teach me how to live in love
When I'm with you, yeah!
I turn it up!

The last lyrics are shouted, and George hits the last drum beat as Quackity does an impromptu solo, ignoring the sheet music that had originally called for an instrumental outro in favor of letting their lead, and Karl, who strums his support, take them home, running up to the edge of the stage as he curls into his instrument finally ending the song with a flourish Sapnap knows only he could pull off.

The crowd is *defeaning* overwhelming as Dream takes the mic once more to speak, shouts practically drowning him out.

"Thank you so much Sunset, we've been the Feral Boys!" The vocalist calls before the host is taking his place at the mic and the five walk themselves off, waving goodbye to an enthusiastic audience until their cries are muted and they're ushered to the backlot to place their instruments back where they belong.

"Holy shit." Is the first thing Quackity says as they run back to their van, and Sapnap can feel his body humming from bass and electric and drums and *energy*. He shakily places his guitar on it's stand, unable to do much more than to smile at his bandmates.

Quackity likely feels the same as his face holds a splitting grin. "Holy shit, we fucking *rocked* that, oh my god."

He sounds somewhat like a broken record, repetitions and iterations of 'Holy shit' and 'Oh my god' seeming to be the only words he can formulate as Karl wraps his hands around Sapnap's arm, giggling.

Dream is smiling wide too, and even George has a wicked, satisfied smirk seated on his lips as the group settle down, adrenaline finally fading out to a more manageable level as they drink and relax.

Finally, more able to voice their excitement, the group stumble over each other to give kudos and anecdotes, praise and wild compliments tangling with one another like yarn before dissolving into laughter.

"Ok, ok, let the big man on vocals start, yeah? Yeah." Quackity finally says, motioning to Dream who nods in thanks.

"Guys, I am... so incredibly proud of us. We absolutely nailed it up there, and everything we did in practice we more than brought to the stage." He starts, smiling from his place beside George.

He's flipped the bandana up so both eyes are visible, and Sapnap catches the glimmer in them as the vocalist raises a gloved hand to push a stray lock of hair back. "Quackity, your energy was amazing, and it really brought our song to life. Not to mention your amazing playing to begin with. Incredible job out there."

Quackity preens under the praise as Dream looks at him proudly before flipping his gaze to Karl. "Karl, you were wonderful, kept perfect time and made sure we stayed in tune. Your style really helped us stand out, and your performance was on point. Thank you." Karl grins and salutes from Sapnap's side, where he's shifted to leaning against the bassist's shoulder, technicolor sweater warm from where it rubs against the wicker of Sapnap's sleeve.

"Sapnap." Dream says, and the younger lifts his eyes to meet those of his friends, midnight green in starlight.

"Dream." He says back with a grin.

"Felt great to be performing with you again. Especially with that crowd. Your playing was amazing, man, always is, but I've gotta make sure you know it, even if you'll hold it above my head for the next couple of weeks."

Sapnap grins as Dream continues speaking, fixing his friend with a playful look. "You know I will." He quips back, and Dream reaches out to shove him lightly. "Hey, hey, gentle dude, I've got a Karl!" He exclaims as Karl pushes against Sapnap's side to get closer. Despite the sticky heat, Sapnap lets him.

Dream looks at him with an indecipherable look Sapnap doesn't dare read too much into before he moves on to look at George with a look far more distinguishable to Sapnap as disgustingly in love.

He fake gags, pulling a laugh from Karl and Quackity and a scoff from George.

"George." Dream croons, the drummer looking up at the blond from where he's seated on the base of the van.

"Yes Dream?" He replies as Dream leans against the door of the vehicle.

"We did it, huh?" George's eyes shine, even in the low light. He nods, and Dream continues. "The three of us, despite everything, we did it."

“We did.” George agrees. They don’t say much more, a lifetime of words communicated between them in the span of seconds, praise and pride unsaid but understood. They don’t need to say much, in the same way Dream’s compliments for Sapnap had been brief, and their conversation is better had by themselves, later on. “But we aren’t just three anymore, are we?”

The two shift their eyes between Quackity and Karl, the brunette still curled into Sapnap’s side while Quackity hovers next to the rhythm guitarist.

“We aren’t.” Dream concurs as he opens his posture back to the rest of the group. “We’re five.”

“Hell yeah you are.” Quackity says, speaking up at last with a smile. “When we perform this Saturday, because there’s no *chance* we didn’t win, I’ll be right there beside you.”

“And me too!” Karl pipes up, situating his posture to be more upright as he chimes in to the conversation. “We had some good competition tonight, but I totally agree, we’ve got this in the bag.” He affirms with a grin. “The other bands? Dogwater. Absolutely taking the L, guarantee.”

This brings a small laugh from everyone in the group, a brief pause taking over the conversation before George speaks.

“Whether we win or not... I’m glad we’re all here.” He admits, voice soft. Sapnap feels his heart pound happily at the drummer’s tone. “We did really good out there. And I think...” He pauses for a moment before smirking. “We absolutely *demolished* the competition.”

Sapnap groans as the soft moment turns back to playful, the other three giggling as the atmosphere changes back to teasing and jovial.

“Aw c’mon dude, I thought you were gonna be soft ‘n shit for once.” Sapnap whines, and George raises his brows with a satisfied smile.

The laughter dies down once more before Sapnap takes his turn to monologue. “Alright, alright, but *seriously*, making up for what George *refuses* to do, we were *awesome* out there tonight.”

He turns to look at Quackity and Karl specifically because there’s so much he wants to say to them, but nothing feels like enough. “You guys... have been absolutely the highlight of these last three weeks. I’ve hosted many auditions, been stuck with these two and so many other members for god knows how long, and none have even come close to making the impact you two have.”

It’s sappy, sure, but with the way Karl is looking up at him, to the soft glimmer in usually sharp black eyes, he can’t help but get as many words as he can off his chest. “I don’t even know how you guys have managed to click so well, but damn, you did. And I couldn’t be fucking happier.”

“Aww Sapnap~” Quackity teases, voice pitching upwards as his lips quirk into a grin.

“Shut up, I’m just... really happy. And proud right now.” He says, and he scoffs as tears prick at the corners of his eyes. “Shit, no chance I’m gonna fucking cry.” Karl snuggles closer to him and Sapnap can feel the vibrations as the brunette hums, amused, and reaches out a hand to grab Quackity’s wrist, pulling him into the forceful embrace.

It’s hot, sweaty, and sticky, but Sapnap cannot bring himself to care as his heart pounds and Quackity’s arms wrap around them both, beanie pushing against sweat-slicked hair.

With the feeling of two hearts pounding in rhythm with his own, Sapnap realizes there’s no place he’d rather be than here, and he reaches his free arm out to wrap around Quackity’s back, pulling him in as close as he can.

“*Thank you.*” He whispers to them both, like it’s some sort of secret, and lets the one tear that slides free fade into the soft fabric of Quackity’s beanie.

They finally pull back from the embrace, but only slightly as Karl cajoles Quackity into his other side, nestling himself between the two in a way that has Sapnap chuckling far too fondly for his own liking.

“Not to cut your little moment short, but it’s probably best we head back to the stage. There were only a couple groups after us, and we can’t miss the awards ceremony.” George says, breaking the oddly domestic air that had grown between Sapnap and the other two guitarists. “After all, they can’t present the first place ribbon if the group meant to receive it isn’t there.” He finishes with a smirk that has the rest of the group letting out a small holler.

“Damn right!” Quackity enthuses as the five start making their way back to the stage, evidently just in time as the last group comes to a close and the host makes their way to announce the end of the performance section.

“Now, everyone, I’m sure we’re all incredibly hyped to see who will be crowned the champions of Sunset this year, BUT, in order to choose our winner, we need to give our judges some time to deliberate. So, we’ll be back in about 10 minutes to announce the winners and two runners up for this competition, see you then!” The crowd erupts into applause as the host walks off, and music begins to play from a speaker, more notable bands like Green Day and Blink 182 pouring out of the vacant stage.

“Ten minutes till they announce us as winners.” Karl says from where they’ve gathered off to the side. Quackity laughs and Sapnap grins as Dream and George converse with one another to the side.

“True.” The bassist agrees as he spots a familiar flash of red hair dipping through the crowd before Bad is pulling him into a bear hug.

“Pandas! You did incredible, oh my goodness!” The older says as he finally sets Sapnap down. He pretends to be annoyed, swiping at invisible dust on his clothes as he’s finally freed.

Outside of Bad’s grasp, he can see Skeppy has been dragged along as well, the shorter standing laxly to the vocalist’s right as Bad regards Sapnap enthusiastically.

“Your group was definitely the best sounding, if you don’t win, I’ll be surprised.” Bad turns to look at Quackity and Karl beside him. “And you guys! Wow! Sapnap wasn’t kidding when he said you were good, Quackity you were amazing up there! And you too Karl, you work so well with the rest of them.” He compliments, and Quackity grins.

“Thanks man, I felt fucking awesome up there.” The lead guitarist replies.

“Language.” Bad chides briefly. “But you guys looked awesome too.” Quackity rolls his eyes with no real malice at Bad’s reprimand and Sapnap hides a smile.

“Well, we figured we’d find you guys so we can be here when they announce the winners, you’ll definitely be top three.” Skeppy says from beside the Bad-Lands vocalist.

“You’re going to *win* is what he means to say. No one else out there was better than you guys.” Bad chimes in and Skeppy huffs.

“Well, Sleepy Boys Inc were pretty good, Bad.” Skeppy says “I mean, I think you guys stand a good chance to beat them. But like,”

“Skeppy!” Bad exclaims, hitting his friend loosely, and Skeppy hisses in exaggerated pain. “Don’t worry about him, you’ll do great, and Sleepy Boys deserve to be beaten this year.” Bad affirms, and Sapnap nods.

“That’s the goal.” He replies, and Quackity scoffs.

“No, that’s what *happening*. I don’t need the awards ceremony to tell me what I already know.” The guitarist says, and Karl nods enthusiastically from next to him.

“Exactly, no worries Sapnap, we’ve got this,” Karl says with a gentle hand on his arm, squeezing Sapnap’s bicep reassuringly.

“Yeah, well. Looks like we’re about to find out.” He says, motioning towards the stage where the host has reappeared, and lights are beginning to focus on the subject.

Dream and George sidle closer to the group as the crowd’s chatter diminishes to a murmur, the host clearing their throat in the mic.

“Alright everyone, it’s the moment you’ve been waiting for... time to announce the winners for the Sunset Band Fever Battle of the Bands! Just a reminder that whoever wins this is given a 40 minute set to perform this Saturday at prime time, as well as a 3,000 dollar grand prize! Second place gets a 1,000 dollar Fender gift card as well as a 1,500 dollar cash prize, and Third gets a 500 dollar Fender gift card and 1,000 dollar cash prize! The last 2 in the top five will also each receive a 500 dollar bonus, please step up to the stage when we call your name to receive your prize, we’ll be starting off with the band that placed fifth:”

The words fade as Sapnap’s mind roars, focused only on top three as unknown names fill the 2 slots before 3rd, heart pounding as the crowd grows near silent.

It feels like everyone is holding their breaths as the announcer moves on to the top three, and anticipation mounts, energy passing through the crowd like wildfire. It reaches Sapnap, and he can tell his bandmates feel it too.

“In third place... congratulations to Chuckle Sandwich and their incredible cover of ‘Rollin’!” The crowd erupts into claps as the trio make their way on stage, Sapnap’s blood boiling as Quackity tenses beside him upon seeing their guitarist’s face.

It’s admittedly well-deserved to them, but Sapnap just hopes they’ll place above the trio. If they don’t, it means they wouldn’t have made top 3, not even top 5, and that possibility crushes Sapnap more than he can comprehend.

Chuckle Sandwich make their way to stand beside the fourth place group, clutching the envelope with their check and voucher as the host continues on.

“And in second place, give a big round of applause to Sleepy Boys Inc for their performance of an original song, ‘Alone in the Dark’! Congrats!” The crowd is deafening once more, but there’s a clear presence of more hollers and shouts of support than for the previous bands as the four members walk onto stage, Tommy taking the lead and happily accepting the envelope.

He waves at the crowd in an infectious way, shouting words that are hardly audible without a mic until Techno collects him and leads him to where Philza and Wilbur are standing next to Schlatt, the latter conversing with their neighbors.

This is it, Sapnap realizes, the make or break. If their name is announced next, then they’ve done it, they’ve managed the unthinkable and accomplished what they’d set out to do, and Wilbur and

Schlatt, and *everyone* who had thought for a moment that they were nothing would see that they were *something*.

It was a new beginning, a fresh start, no more years toiling over Sunset, and no more years sick of trying to win. New horizons, maybe a record deal, possibilities, and more.

Not to mention the satisfaction of rubbing it deep into Wilbur's face, watching the songwriter's facade crumble as he eats his words.

Sapnap's mind whirs, buzzing with nerves, fingers twitching at his side until a warm hand slides between his own.

It's Quackity's, he realizes, but he notices the lack of anything else coming from the shorter as the host begins to read.

"And finally, this year's winner of the Sunset Band Fever Battle of the Bands, who will be performing this Saturday right back here for a full set..."

The anticipation crawls, worming through limbs and fingers, sending a full body shiver through Sapnap as he grips Quackity's hand tighter.

He's not sure he can focus on the stage as his stomach roils, so he focuses on Quackity's face instead, and the other hand that has found its way back to gripping his bicep.

On one side is Karl, familiar, and calming, soft and soothing as his fingers trace circles in Sapnap's upper arm, the guitarist's own way of quelling his nerves. And on the other, in Sapnap's line of vision, is Quackity, face round and expression stony as he focuses on the stage.

The small smile tattoo peaks out from under his collar and from behind the dangling upside down cross earring he's sporting, and Sapnap traces the curve of his neck up to his jaw and finally to his eyes.

He's focused on the shorter's gaze, midnight black, and the brunette behind him's hand, featherlight as the host announces the winners and his eardrums roar with the audience's enthusiasm as time stops.

It doesn't seem real, and he hardly believes the name circulating through his head until he comes back into focus, grounded by Karl, eyes flickering until they can find Quackity's once more, focusing on their glitter as Karl pulls them all into a hug, and cheers are registered.

He's numb, in some ways, as arms wrap around him and shouts come from somewhere, and he's lost, until he sees Quackity's bright smile, and warm hands with technicolor nails are pulling him forwards towards the stage, *the stage*.

And that's when it clicks, when Quackity is looking at him like the moon has been hung and the stars right beside it, when Karl's voice, ecstatic yet gentle is in his ear, that they've done it, they've *won* and the overwhelming urge to just *kiss them both* is obscenely staggering.

He doesn't know how he withholds when every fiber of his being longs to reach out and to *embrace*, but as they reach the stage, and he sees George taking the envelope with shining eyes, shaking the hand of the host and leading them to their place beside the Sleepy Boys, he finds solace in gripping both of their hands, on on either side as the host continues.

"Congratulations again to our first place winners, the Feral Boys who you can come on out Saturday evening to see a full set from!"

The applause is raucous, and Sapnap finds himself almost automatically raising a hand to wave at the audience, yelling out hoarse ‘Thank yous!’ alongside his bandmates until they’re finally ushered from the stage.

As the five reach their van, congratulated by other competitors as they do, they pause, teary eyes meeting one another in the moonlight, and it’s not long before Karl surges forward, grabbing as much of everyone as he can and pulling them into a group hug that’s never felt better.

In the tangled mess of arms, a small huddle filled with sniffs and sobs of happiness, Sapnap can’t feel more alive than he does at this very moment.

Chapter End Notes

YEAAHH LETS GOOOO
THEY DID IT!

I hope you guys enjoyed, because I LOVED writing this chapter. I hope I did it justice, but let me know by leaving your kudos and comments! I reply to them all!

Or if pm-ing me on [twitter](#) (or just commenting on a recent post) is more your style, go for it!

But of course, we aren't quite done yet, because *gasp*, karlnapity haven't quite kissed yet, hmmm

Not to worry, I'll be back next week with an update, so I'll see you then!

See you soon,
Cure :)

Panic Vertigo

Chapter Summary

Post-Performance celebration, and impromptu stargazing

Chapter Notes

Well hello everyone! It's been a bit.

For those who aren't on my [twitter](#), I started college this past week! So as you can imagine, time was hard to find haha

Thank you all for bearing with me, and I hope you enjoy this chapter! Please pay attention to the end notes as you will be given a chance to vote for what you want the next multi-chap fic to be, whether you're on twitter or here!

As always, thank you for the tremendous support on this work, the comments on last chapter had me smiling so much <3

Here's the [playlist](#), if you want to hear the songs and get in the mood, and as always, I hope you enjoy!

-

BETA'd twice, all love to my new roomie for giving me a hand ;)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Of course, the festivities are far from over. It's around 9PM, the night is young, and a venue full of performers still raging with leftover adrenaline and far from fading energy take to an open club nearby to celebrate, as is tradition.

The Feral Boys are no different, having gone to the after-party for years even after being so close to first. It's the perfect way to relax and unwind, and this year, it feels all the more sweet after a well-earned victory.

The music is loud, bass reverberating into the parking lot as the 5 pull up, still running off the high of *winning* (something Sapnap's still not entirely sure he's processed). They park the van, and jump out, humming the residual of the song that had been playing as they walk up to the front doors of the club, pausing as they see some familiar faces leaning against the side of the building.

There, half-shrouded by shadow is Wilbur, relaxing with the rest of his band and likely celebrating with something a bit more age appropriate than alcohol, given Tommy's presence.

Sapnap sees George's eyes track over the group, and it feels natural to follow the drummer as they make their way over.

"Feral Boys! Great performance out there tonight, no-one I'd rather lose to." The Sleepy Boy's

bassist says as they approach, holding out a hand cuffed with sweatbands and boasting an amicable grin. Despite his predispositions about Wilbur, Sappnap has no real reason to be upset with, or even vaguely frustrated, with the other members of the band, Philza included.

Perhaps there's some resentment from association, but he remembers Wilbur's evasive language earlier, and decides the rest of the band must not know the full story. So he plays nice, returning an even smile as he leads the conversation, unsure if George could stomach being civil.

"Philza right?" The other nods as Sappnap takes his hand. "You guys were great out there too."

"Wilbur never told me you guys were good! And you certainly weren't that good last year, no offense." Tommy chimes in, butting his head into Sappnap's line of vision in a way that's admittedly a little endearing.

From behind, Technoblade pulls Tommy back slightly, remaining overall silent.

Sappnap flips his focus to the mass of unwieldy blonde hair and a body far too tall for Sappnap's liking.

"Tommy!" Philza chides fondly, and Sappnap huffs a small laugh.

"Sorry! But it's true!" The younger asserts.

Wilbur remains blissfully quiet, as does George.

"Well, you guys were really bringing it out there too. Didn't know you could sing, Tommy." Sappnap compliments, because least to blame would be a child. Tommy practically glows with the praise, curved posture straightening as he glances at Phil in a small moment of pride.

"Thank you Big Man, I've been working on it!" He replies, and Sappnap spares a glance to Wilbur, who he now notes has been holding steady eye-contact with George the entire run of the conversation.

"Ok, well, we just wanted to congratulate you guys before we head on in," Sappnap says, and Philza nods, as the 5 go to turn away "Pleasure playing against you guys tonight."

"Yeah, for sure mate, same to you" The other bassist says, ruffling Tommy's hair as the younger protests, waving his arms to brush him off. "Have a good time tonight!"

The band start to head to the club door, leaving the Sleepy Boys behind them, but Wilbur's voice hailing them from across the pavement pauses them in their tracks.

"George. We should talk." The lead guitarist says carefully, and George scoffs, but stays still, giving Wilbur a silent go-ahead. Sappnap watches Philza take in the interaction from a distance before calling out to Wilbur.

"Will, we'll be back at the Subaru when you guys have finished. Play nice."

Something in the way he talks makes Sappnap think maybe the Sleepy Boy's bassist knew more than he was letting on. Either way, the other three of Wilbur's band members disperse, leaving their lead guitarist alone to chat.

"So now you want to talk, hm? You're assuming I have more to say to you." George snaps, and Wilbur huffs out a laugh, glancing away briefly before picking back up eye-contact with George.

“Well, I just... wanted to congratulate you.” Wilbur replies, grin sharp, but sad. Sappnap can’t find it in himself to be sympathetic.

“Ok, look, cut the bullshit dude.” Quackity chimes in suddenly, and George sends him a quick glare that has the lead guitarist shutting up and keeping his words to himself.

Wilbur just laughs as George carries on. “What’s the real reason? We *won* Wilbur. It’s *over*. You lost, fair and square, and we *won*. Now leave us alone. Leave *me* alone.”

Wilbur throws his hands up at the accusations defensively.

“I genuinely just wanted to congratulate the group of you. You did win fair and square. I can’t deny it.” Wilbur begins. “I can be upset, I can think my band deserved better, but that would be a lie, and I am nothing if not an honest man.”

Sappnap almost wants to call him out on his crap like Quackity had earlier.

George lifts his chin as Wilbur continues. “I didn’t think you had it in you, but I knew by pushing you you’d find it. See? It all worked out. You accused me last year of coming back only to harass you. You were right. It was a challenge.”

Sappnap’s blood boils as Wilbur’s silver tongue talks utter shit.

But George has grown, mind sharper and stance steeled. He doesn’t seem to buy the words Wilbur is swearing by, and Sappnap mentally congratulates the drummer.

“I *know* you George, you don’t work unless you have-”

“You do *not* know me.” George interrupts, voice strong as he takes a step forward. Wilbur’s mouth hangs open, silenced. “You knew me. Once. But not anymore.” He takes a deep breath. “And don’t you dare try to *convince* me that you did this for my *benefit* when we both know you’re as selfish as you were when you left us.”

Wilbur’s lips draw into a small, sadistic grin.

“Unless you have anything real to say, I’ll reiterate. Leave us alone.” The silence that hangs between them holds more weight than any of the words said before, and finally, Wilbur’s facade falls, his face open.

“Fine. I will.” He pauses, taking a small step back as he thinks over his next words, and Sappnap watches as the song-writer fiddles with the ends of his jacket before meeting George’s eyes earnestly. “You were really good up there.”

The man’s eyes sweep over the rest of the group, fixating extra on Sappnap and Dream as he does, “You all were.” Sappnap swallows thickly. “And I mean that.”

This time, Sappnap believes him. “I accept my defeat, you deserved that win. I don’t take back anything I’ve said, or done, for that matter.” George bristles at those words. “But I can sincerely congratulate you, and have us end on the best note possible.”

Sappnap watches Wilbur hold out a hand, breaching the gap between himself and George with a single motion. “We’re at odds, boys, we always will be. But let’s at least part as friendly enemies, yeah? After all, it takes good competition to drive yourself. That includes me. I’m glad, if nothing else, there will be someone else pushing me forward, nipping at my heels as I continue my journey.” He says, the hand not held in front of him punctuating his words.

"I despise you." George shoots back instead of closing the distance.

"And I you! All of you, really." Wilbur says back with a grin, and Sapnap scoffs. "But come on now. This is the most we've talked in years! You know as well as I this is the best it gets so come on," He wiggles his hand in front of George. "Be a good sport, and give us a reason never to speak again."

At that, George finally takes the hand, clasping it with a sharp clap of skin against skin as Wilbur grins down at the hold.

A thumb traces over the back of George's hand as Wilbur's expression grows suddenly tired.

"I do want you to know I did truly love you once. That was never a lie." Wilbur says softly, and George takes a sharp inhale. "But we faded, a perfect decrescendo." He shakes George's hand firmly once before severing the grasp and turning to Dream with the same gesture. "You take care of him now. Live your perfect love story. If you're lucky, I'll crash your wedding." He says with a wink.

Dream heaves a sigh before returning the gesture, a firm shake prompting Wilbur to pull his hand back. "I'll be who you never were." He assures, and Wilbur grins.

"Good. Good! Really, really good." Wilbur says, and finally turns to Sapnap, repeating the process. "And you. I always liked you the best. Make sure Dream learns to play an actual instrument, yeah?" Sapnap meets Wilbur's eyes with a flat stare before finally taking his hand.

"Yeah, sure." He answers, voice sharp, but honest.

"Good lad." Wilbur replies, as they shake on it. "And to you two! I reckon I'll be hearing your names around a lot more, eh? You've managed to make these guys sound half-decent! Good on you! Take care of them." He says, still holding a wolfish grin.

Quackity grunts. "They were good on their own." The bassist asserts, and Wilbur nods. "And for the record, I still think you're a slimy piece of shit."

Wilbur laughs at Quackity's statement, taking his hand to shake firmly. "Of course, of course."

"I think you suck too. Also for the record." Karl quips, and Wilbur chuckles softly.

"I expect nothing less from the pair of you." He affirms as he finishes the gesture with Karl, backing up and stuffing his hands in his pocket. "So long, Feral Boys." He finally says with a wave as he begins to walk off.

The 5 watch as Wilbur walks towards the edge of the lot where his car is presumably parked, and Sapnap stares at him until he can no longer see the songwriter.

"Well. That's one way to have a conversation." Dream says, and George scoffs.

"Jackass." Quackity reaffirms, met with general murmurs of agreement. "Anyways, now that *that's* over, I've been *dying* to get in there since I heard them playing some Taylor Swift. Forget Wilbur, it's time to celebrate!"

And with Quackity's uncanny ability to shift the mood, indeed, the 5 perk up as they make their way back to the club door, flashing IDs and gaining entrance to the dark interior flashing with colors and pounding with bass.

Wilbur behind them, it was time to focus on the future and enjoy themselves in the best way: Dancing and Drinks.

-

Sapnap's body pulses as songs reverberate, the pleasant hum of alcohol adding to the effect as he cradles a drink in one hand and jumps in time to whatever song is playing.

He had been dancing with Quackity a bit earlier, and Karl a tad too, though the latter seemed far more apt to stand to the side sipping on a ginger ale. Their rhythm guitarist had agreed to be the designated driver for the night, and Sapnap had a hunch it was for more than just being responsible.

For now though, he was left to his own devices, Quackity having gone to order more drinks sometime back, and Dream and George being... somewhere. Sapnap wasn't too keen to find out where, given he had a clue of what they were up to, and would rather save his eyes.

But he *is* getting rather lonely, Quackity having not returned for a couple songs now, and decides his best bet is to locate Karl and take a break from the vibrant dance floor, both for his own sake, and for the sake of his legs. He's sure they'll be sore tomorrow, but he makes his way off the floor, eyes scanning around the fringes of the crowd.

It's somewhat of a feat through the pleasant haze of the beer in his hand, but he's nothing if not responsible at drinking and decides to grab a cup of water to chase the rest of his beverage down in hopes of clearing his mind.

He's also hoping he'll find Karl lounging at one of the tables near the bar, or maybe Quackity distracted by conversation with the bartender or other guest.

Sapnap finds neither, but he does see Dream and George chatting amicably, and thankfully mostly hands-off, at one of the booths. As he receives his water, he makes his way over to inquire about the whereabouts of the other two.

"Hey guys!" He greets with a dopey smile Dream returns, the blond standing to hug Sapnap. He always did get extra touchy while drunk.

"Hey man! Sobering up?" Dream asks, voice loose as he motions towards the water in Sapnap's hand. The bassist shrugs.

"Takin' a break that's for sure. Was lookin' for uh, Karl and Q." He adds on as words form slowly.

Dream nods as George takes a swig of some cocktail behind him.

"Yeah, I dunno where either are, thought they'd be... be with you." Dream says before plopping back into his seat to take another sip of his drink.

"Mmm I think Karl went to get some fresh air." George pipes in, sounding oddly far away. He sways softly into Dream's side, the lead singer staring down at the boy on his shoulder adoringly, almost as if he didn't believe he was real.

"K. Ok, cool, I'm gonna... gonna go look for 'im." Sapnap replies, waving his free hand sloppily as he starts to walk away.

"Yeah, good luck." Dream replies without looking away from George.

“Yeah, yeah, I’m- I will.” He slurs as he turns towards the door, still searching for Quackity as he makes his way towards the front.

The blast of cool night air is somewhat grounding, and clears some of the fog from his mind as he scans the parking lot for a familiar brunette.

It takes some searching, and some intuition for Karl’s character, but it eventually occurs to Sapnap to check some of the surrounding areas. The club resides somewhat further away from the city, and boasts some rolling green hills that Sapnap thinks are part of a nearby golf-course.

Knowing Karl’s delight for the night, he manages to find the taller laying on his back at the peak of one of the hills, ginger ale nestled in some grass by his side and eyes trained on the stars above.

“Hey Karl~” Sapnap says, voice lilting as he plops down by the brunette’s head. The guitarist cranes his neck to observe Sapnap, eyes glittering in moonlight as he smiles.

“Hey Sap. You doing alright?” He asks, and Sapnap nods, taking a sip of water. Karl’s eyes jump to the cup and he nods in understanding. “Ah, sobering up a bit, hm?”

Sapnap shrugs. “Dunno. Kinda. Just takin’ a break. Got- got lonely.” He confesses, and Karl giggles.

“Alright. Well, I’m just stargazing, come on, lay down, it’s really pretty.” He says, patting the grass in front of Sapnap’s legs.

The bassist grunts and follows the brunette’s advice, easing onto his back and resting his head in the plush cushion of grass as his eyes naturally find the sky.

The stars are glittering quite brightly, and they’re easier to see out here, further away from the city. The only real light comes from the club’s exterior illumination and the town a little ways beyond, but he assumes that’s why Karl’s out here.

It’s reminiscent of the lookout spot, and Sapnap finds himself sighing happily, brushing his flushed arm against the cooler skin of Karl’s.

“D’ya like stars?” He asks, even though the answer feels obvious. In his peripherals, he sees Karl smile softly.

“No, I’m out here on my back because I just looove golf course grass.” Karl replies, and Sapnap, unable to differentiate truth from fiction at this point, looks away with a flush and resigned

“Oh.”

Karl huffs fondly as he nudges Sapnap reassuringly. “That was a joke, nimrod. You really are drunk, hm?”

Sapnap flushes deeper, embarrassed as he downs some more water. “Uh, working on it.” He says, and Karl giggles.

“Well, in the meantime, look over there.” Karl points a slender finger off in some direction Sapnap barely manages to follow. “That one’s Ursa Major. Or the Big Dipper. See?”

Sapnap nods, but really, he’s more focused on the orange fire decal plastered on Karl’s pointer finger.

“Ursa Major’s also called the Great Bear. There’s different stories for her, but I know the Greek one best.” Karl goes on, pulling his finger back, hand going to lay on his stomach.

Sapnap, still admittedly focused on the guitarist’s nail art, reaches out to grab the taller’s hand, cool from the night air, a stark contrast to the heat Sapnap tends to hold in his palm.

Karl lets Sapnap drag his hand, tracing over the nails as he listens to the guitarist’s story. “So, basically, there was this beautiful lady, Callisto, and Zeus, being the absolute jerk that he is, had an affair with her.”

“Zeus.” Sapnap snorts sardonically. Karl giggles.

“Yeah, *Zeus*. Anyways, Hera finds out, because of course she does, Zeus is notoriously terrible at hiding his affairs, but the problem here is that Zeus and Callisto have this son, named Arcas.

And Hera, rightfully so, is upset, and she is notoriously pretty violent with all of Zeus’s lovers. So Zeus, knowing he has to protect his side-piece and son, does the only logical thing and turns them into bears.” At that, Sapnap stops messing with Karl’s fingers to stare at him incredulously.

“Really?” He says, and Karl nods.

“Really. Though, honestly, Zeus has done worse things to protect his affairs.” Karl replies, and Sapnap gasps.

“Worse?!” He exclaims in drunken stupor. Karl giggles as he nods once more.

“I’ll tell you more Greek myths later if I get the chance. For now, the rest of this story.” The guitarist says, and Sapnap settles back in. “So, once they’re bears, to truly, really protect them, he picks the two up by their tails and throws them right up into the sky with such force, their tails stretch out! And so, Callisto became Ursa Major, and her son, Ursa Minor.”

“Where’s Ursa Minor?” Sapnap asks, squinting at the sky. In all truth, he hasn’t even located Ursa Major, but after hearing the story, he’s desperate to locate either.

“Over there.” Karl replies, taking the hand not currently cradled by Sapnap and pointing towards a cluster of stars a little ways away from where he had been pointing before. Sapnap nods, searching the inky darkness and attempting to make out shapes in a still slightly addled mind.

There’s not quite any luck, but he’s saved from having to ask Karl to point it out again by a new figure joining them on the hill.

To Sapnap’s surprise, it’s Quackity, boasting a dopey smile the bassist can only assume is heavily influenced by alcohol as he plops down on Sapnap’s other side.

“Hey guys! I was looking for you for, like, a while!” The lead says, voice erring on giggles with almost every word. Sapnap grins up at the guitarist from his plot on the grass.

“Hey man, we’re just uh... well, I’m sobering up and Karl’s doing star shit.” He says, and Quackity’s gaze shifts from looking down at the bassist to looking over at Karl.

“Star shit? You into astronomy?” He asks. And then. “Oh yeah, sobering up, yeah, I’m gonna do that- do that thing too.”

“I’m more into the stories behind the stars, but sure.” Karl explains. “You have water for yourself?”

Quackity looks at his empty hands, and then, almost tragically, his expression falls, emotions shifting on a dime as he realizes his lack of forethought to bring a cup of water.

“Oh shit. Oh- no. No I didn’t I’m- I-” He struggles for words for a moment before Sapnap speaks up.

“Don’t worry Q, you can share with me!” The bassist replies, offering his cup as he desperately tries to bring back the bright smile the shorter had had mere moments ago.

It works, in the way that only a drunken exchange can, but Quackity looks down at him so adoringly, Sapnap finds he doesn’t mind how it happened, just that it happened.

“Thank you, Sapnap.” And it sounds so earnest it has Sapnap blushing.

“N-no problem.” He manages to respond, but spends a bit longer holding the lead’s gaze.

“Lay down Q, I’ll tell more stories about the stars.” Karl says softly. Quackity nods and obliges, easing himself back until his head sits mere inches away from Sapnap’s own. “How about we do Cassiopeia?”

“Yeah, sounds like a plan.” Sapnap says, and the grass shifts as Quackity nods beside him.

“Ok, so Cassiopeia.” He points to a space in the sky Sapnap doesn’t attempt to follow. Instead, he lets his eyes fall shut as Karl begins the story. “We’re doing Greek again. Basically, Cassiopeia was this great, beautiful Queen, and she knew it too. Everytime she could, she would boast about her beauty, that she was the most beautiful in all the lands, even more beautiful than the sea nymphs.”

“Sea nymphs? Are they supposed to be pretty?” Quackity asks.

“Mhm. In Greek Mythology they are.” He replies, and Quackity hums back understandingly. “So, this makes Poseidon, the God of the sea, angry, so he sends a massive sea monster, Cetus, another constellation you can’t see right now, to destroy her kingdom.

So of course, Cassiopeia wants it to stop, so she finds a way to pacify the monster: By sacrificing her daughter Andromeda.”

Gasps come from both Sapnap and Quackity, and Karl giggles at their synchronization.

“What? Why the fuck- why would she- she do that?!” Quackity blurts out, sitting upright and pulling more laughter from Karl.

“I told you, to make the sea monster leave her kingdom alone.” Karl replies, and Sapnap groans, Quackity tsk-ing from beside him.

“That’s dumb.” The lead says before laying back down and nabbing a quick gulp of Sapnap’s drink.

“An-y-ways, she was tied to a rock by the sea-” The two gasp again, but Karl continues. “And just as she’s about to get eaten by the great Cetus, bam! Perseus swoops in on mighty Pegasus and saves her!”

“Thank god.” Sapnap murmurs.

“And the Gods, pleased with Perseus’s heroism and Andromeda’s bravery, lifted not only those

two but Cassiopeia to the heavens to be constellations.” Karl says.

“Why the Queen?! She doesn’t deserve to- deserve that!” Quackity exclaims, and Karl chuckles.

“No, she doesn’t. She was put there as punishment, bound in a chair and frozen in the sky, placed so that every once in a while, she’s upside down, and can’t move.” Karl finishes, and Quackity lifts his hands to clap.

“Good. That’s what she fucking deserves.” Sappnap asserts, Quackity voicing his agreement from beside him, and Karl giggling the whole way through.

By the time the cup of water in Sappnap’s hands has been decimated, no longer full but pointedly empty, nearly every constellation visible in the sky has been explained, and neither of the guitarists are quite so drunk anymore.

Laughter echoes as the three chat about a side tangent they’d gone on, having finished with stories of the sky a few minutes back, and evidently, they circle back to the night’s performances, expressing their excitement, and exchanging their perspectives.

“-yeah, it was wild. I was just like... clinging onto Sappnap like he was some- some stress ball.” Karl says with a soft bark of laughter.

“Ok, but I was gripping back just as hard.” Sappnap replies, easing back in his mind to remember the stark emotions he had felt during the awards ceremony. “I didn’t even... I didn’t even *register* we had won until we were on stage, and getting handed the award. I felt like I was... like I was floating.”

“You looked like it too. You just looked... kinda far away.” Quackity notes and Karl nods from Sappnap’s other side.

“I just- It was all of that and then... and then some other things and-” Sappnap pauses and flushes as he remembers the second half of heavy emotions that had gripped him in that moment.

“Other things?” Quackity prods, nudging the bassist’s shoulder with his own. Sappnap grimaces, embarrassed.

“Nothing important just- kinda embarrassing ‘s all.” He admits, and Karl and Quackity share a look over him.

“Embarrassing?” Karl pushes, causing Sappnap to flush even deeper.

“Guys, really it’s not- not important-” He tries, but the two seem deadset.

“I dunno, seems pretty important to me, Four-String, come on, lay it on us.” Quackity says with a wolfish grin that simultaneously has Sappnap reeling and fearful.

“What Quackity said! It’s just us and the stars out here.” Karl asserts, pushing his way into Sappnap’s space, and looking up at him, constellations reflected in his honey-brown eyes.

“I-” He starts.

“There you go, come on.” Quackity pipes up softly from behind him, leaning against the bassist’s back and resting his chin on the taller’s shoulder.

Warm breath puffs against Sapnap's neck from the lead guitarist's position, and as he looks into Karl's eyes and relishes in the warmth of Quackity on his back, he lets the words fall loose, the last of the frenzy of emotions he had felt at the height of the show spilling out into the night air.

"I just kinda felt like I could-" He inhales, averting his eyes from Karl for a moment before returning them. "Like I could kiss you. Both."

Small vibrations from Quackity's soft chuckle hum on Sapnap's back as the older shifts his position, a free hand coming up to gently hold the bassist's chin and tilt it to his left.

"Well, what stopped you?" He asks as Karl takes the opportunity to grab one of Sapnap's hands and trace down his fingers soothingly.

The proximity to Quackity on one side, and the soft intimacy from his hand in Karl's on the other has Sapnap feeling euphoric as he scrambles for a reason why, drowning in the flood of attention and affection from the two people he realizes he's wanted this from most.

"P-people? And- like, consent and-" He replies, words muddled as he tries to wade through the thoughts in his head. He's starting to ramble slightly, he knows, but Karl giggles from in front of him and he finds he doesn't really mind.

"Ok, well what's stopping you now?" Quackity follows up, breath tickling the space next to Sapnap's lips. "There's no people. And you have my consent. Karl?"

"Oh yeah, absolutely. Anything you wanna do, handsome." The taller says with a wink. Sapnap feels his head getting lighter.

In this moment, nothing seems to matter as crickets chirp and cicadas sing and Quackity speaks, low and soft, and Karl laughs, sweet and tender, and Sapnap wants to *kiss* them, and maybe, they want to kiss him too.

"Come on, where's the confidence from try-outs, hm?" Karl teases softly, leaning up, and resting his hand on the side of Sapnap's face opposite to Quackity's.

Sapnap simply *melts* into their hands, into his head, into the moment. "'Dunno." He murmurs, instead of doing the one thing his mind is begging him to.

"Jeez, c'mere." Karl says before there's lips on Sapnap's own, and the world stops, stars shining brighter than Sapnap's ever seen, a crescendo coming to life in his heart as seconds start to feel like lifetimes.

And as soon as it's there, it's over as Karl pulls back, a full stop rest, eyes glittering and hand still potently present on the bassist's cheek.

Sapnap feels himself chasing after lost lips, and Karl giggles. "Save that for your lead, cutie." The guitarist chides fondly, flushed high on his cheek as a second hand tilts Sapnap's head further to the left before another pair of lips are covering his, and the world stops for a second time in the span of minutes.

It's different to the gentle push of Karl's, more passionate and perhaps feverous in a way that feels all too perfect to associate with Quackity. Sapnap revels in the vivacity of the kiss before it's gone, and a hand previously on his chin comes to rest in the curls at the nape of his neck, pushing his head together until foreheads meet.

"There we go, Four-String." Quackity says softly, the softest Sapnap thinks he's ever heard him.

He sighs softly, eyes still fluttered shut, before arms wrap around his torso, pulling him and Quackity impossibly closer as a puff of brunette hair nestles into his chest.

“Thank you.” Sapnap whispers, echoing the words from after the concert once more and meaning them just as much.

“Of course.” Karl replies as he loosens his grip on the two before motioning exaggeratedly at Quackity. “My turn now please.” The rhythm guitarist asks petulantly, and both Sapnap and Quackity laugh as the shorter leans forward to press a kiss to Karl’s lips.

The brunette sighs happily as they embrace over Sapnap’s shoulder, and Sapnap finds himself grinning as he watches the two, heart beating and soul spiraling. He feels like a symphony as the two part, unable to do more than stare happily at the two men before him.

“Hey, I love you both.” Karl says eventually, words harmonizing with the crickets and the careful rustle of the trees.

“I think.. I think I’m gonna love you guys too.” Sapnap says, because it feels too fresh to say more, but too much to say less.

And as the three embrace once more, spotlighted by the moon and cradled by the stars, Sapnap joins in the silent melody brewing in the night.

Chapter End Notes

Well!

I hope y'all enjoyed heehee ;)

Now, onto business.

First of all, I am running a [poll](#) on the update post, giving you 3 options for this next multichap fic, and here are the descriptions!

If you're not on twitter, simply mention which sounds most interesting to you in your comment, and I will count that in the vote!

HOGWARTS AU - Quackity centric. KarlNapItY with background DNF. More plot centric as well. Set in a pre-Harry Potter Hogwarts. Quackity seems to have trouble follow wherever he goes. After being forced to transfer all the way to Hogwarts, he winds up in detention with some interesting Wizards as a mysterious force begins to threaten the school...

CANON COMPLIANT -> DIVERGENT: Quackity centric, karlnapity, plot centric and found family dynamic centric too. Quackity begins to realize how similar he's becoming to Wilbur and begins to make amends with those he's hired for Las Nevadas, reforming the country and focusing his broken heart into being built back together by the members of Las Nevadas. That is until one of the reasons for his broken heart shows up in Las Nevadas, desperate for aid in finding reason number two for his broken heart who has been missing for several months.

MAFIA AU - Quackity centric (lmao it's all quackity *cocks gun* always has been), karlnapity and dnf, plot still a wip and subject to change, will be written as a oneshot/minific if not selected. Quackity is a recently graduated law student moving to

New York to start his new career, but after seeing something he shouldn't have, he's face to face with New York's infamous Kinoko Crew, an underground and dangerous hive of criminal activity known for heading the hallucinogen market selling Shrooms. Will he be able to find a place for himself amongst hardened (and admittedly kinda hot) gang members, or will he find his lifespan cut several years short.

WARNING: This AU will have heavy angst and graphic depictions of violence, but will, ofc, have a happy ending. Keep this in mind for voting. Also, I will be doing more research to make this plot more cohesive, sorry if it's a little all over the place rn

Vote now and in the comments, you will have until the 8th of September for comments, twitter voting closes on the 5th

Thank you for reading, make sure to leave your kudos and comments, I will try to respond to all the comments, but with all the incredible support I've been getting, I can't guarantee that <3

Thank you for reading and see you next week for the final official chapter, and, ideally, the epilogue on the same day!

See ya soon,
Cure <3

Favorite Liar PT 1

Chapter Summary

Part one of the final day of Sunset and the Feral Boys' performance!

Chapter Notes

So, contrary to popular belief, I am not dead, but in person college evidently packs a bit more heat than I thought.

Which leads to this chapter being split in half for my own sanity and because you guys deserve some content.

I've been trying my best to update this regularly, but with such a big chapter (mmm finale) it's been hard to finish. So, I split it :)

Enjoy part one now and part two later!

As always, please make sure to follow me on [twitter](#) for updates and content in the meanwhile, I use it pretty regularly bc it's easier to make a quick tweet than publish a whole chapter every day LMAO.

Also, [playlist](#) very cool

And as a cool treat, here's some recommended reading ambience, and what I had on while writing:

[Crowd Ambience \(loop\)](#)

[1985](#)

[American Idiot](#)

[James Dean](#)

[Stacy's Mom](#)

[Freaking Out](#) (bonus for a hilarious MV)

Popped on the crowd ambience in one tab and the song in the other, looped it and BAM, you're at sunset.

Enjoy this chapter! Sorry for being absent!

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BETA'D once and a half.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“I still can’t believe you wimped out when it came to kissing them first.” George chastises as he contemplates the nutritional facts on a box of snack bars. A brief shrug and he tosses them into the cart Sapnap is sullenly pushing along.

“Well it still worked *out*, so does it matter?” Sapnap retorts, reaching in front of the drummer to

grab a box of fruit leathers off the shelf. “Besides, it’s not like you did any better.”

George raises a brow at him. “I confessed first.”

“But you didn’t *kiss* him first so it doesn’t matter.” George huffs at Sapnap’s statement but holds fast to his opinion.

“Yeah, because I wanted *him* to kiss *me*, my goading was on purpose, it’s not like I stood there staring at his lips until he did something. I *told* him to do it.” George argues, and Sapnap flushes at his friend’s dig.

“Whatever.” He mutters as George checks something else off the list and they start to make their way to the next aisle. “Oh, by the way, Quackity wanted some of this uh, specific coffee brand, he forgot to put it on the list but he told me before we headed out.”

“Mhm. Was that before or after the goodbye kiss?” George teases with a smirk, and Sapnap fixes him with a blank stare.

“Oh, um, let me see, I think it was before you and Dream’s goodbye *makeout* and *after* your morning fuck so,” He quips with a shrug as George snorts out a laugh.

“Don’t know what you’re talking about. Let’s get your stupid boyfriend his stupid fancy coffee.” The drummer finally says, and Sapnap’s eyes fall soft as he thinks of Quackity.

While George and himself had gone out grocery shopping, picking up various snacks for later tonight as well as restocking a rapidly declining kitchen (sharing a house with 3 other people was no joke), Dream had stayed home to work on a job and Quackity was working on unpacking the last of his things.

Between the two days from Wednesday until now, alongside the rapid growth of the Feral Boys’ official socials, Quackity had finally gotten the time to grab the rest of his belongings and begin unpacking.

Sapnap, Dream, and George had helped where they could, Sapnap using it as an excuse to spend more time with his *boyfriend* (the title still feels surreal), but between getting sidetracked, and distracted by... *other* things, it had taken a couple days for the boxes to be fully sorted.

Since Quackity had been barely 3 boxes away from being finished, he had politely declined the invitation to go shopping, which left George and Sapnap to do the chores.

In all honesty, it was nice.

Sapnap couldn’t remember the last time he had spent time alone with just George, and in the car ride up and throughout the store, the two had mainly spent the time chatting about their new relationships, much easier to discuss (and gush about) outside of the earshot of their respective partners.

While George wasn’t necessarily an emotional person (unlike Dream), he truly did care about the singer, and Sapnap, ever a romantic, was happy to see his best friend’s affections thoroughly returned.

And though George hadn’t pushed about whatever had happened outside of the club, he remembers how adamant Dream had been to find out what had happened between him and the other two guitarists, even battling a hangover for information.

As soon as the 5 had decided it was time to leave the club on Wednesday, Dream, even through a very-drunk mind, was able to notice Sapnap's giddiness, Quackity's excessively affectionate actions, and the sappy glances Karl snuck in the rearview mirror the entire way home.

It had led to a barrage of beer-bold questions as soon as they arrived, that the three managed to evade with giggles and the excuse of guiding a very sleepy Quackity to bed.

The next morning, they were not so lucky, and through the necessary quiet for Dream to nurse his hangover, the story had been eaked out and solidified with congratulations from Dream's end and jibes from George.

Now that it was just George and Sapnap, specifics and dirty details were spilled, buffered by giggles and laughter from the playful repartee, shoulders nudging against one another and eyebrows raising in exaggerated expressions.

Sapnap had heard most of Dream's side already, but hearing George's perspective pulls it all together, and makes Sapnap's heart soar with love for his best friends.

As they finally make their way to checkout, and George rushes back to get a last minute item Dream had requested, Sapnap loads their items onto the conveyor belt, shoots a playful text to Quackity of his requested coffee, and smiles to himself.

-

Electric tangs fill the air as Quackity plucks to warm up his guitar from beside Sapnap, Dream adjusting the mic height from the front of the stage, and George tapping idle beats on his set from a ways back.

Karl is at Sapnap's feet, chewing through a snack bar and bobbing his head to the improvised medley Quackity is using as they prepare for soundcheck while Sapnap stares across the empty stage in front of him and the blank field of seats beyond.

Soon, he realizes, those seats will be packed with concert-goers, a full audience bigger even than the crowd on Wednesday. A nervous breath is taken as he switches his eyes to focus on Dream's back instead, the older's crop-top shifting as the mic is finally lifted into place.

The stage is much bigger too, he notes. And they're all on their own instruments. They had helped George lug his set up onto the stage with the help of attendants, and Dream was even allowed to bring his own mic, though Sapnap knew he wasn't terribly picky.

The stage stretches wide, plenty of room for movement and playing, and *enjoying yourself*, which Sapnap knows is the ultimate target.

Because while Wednesday had been competition, peak performance, the show tonight was about getting fans, making 40 minutes fly by and entertaining the crowds while doing so. Sapnap couldn't *wait*.

Dream's voice pulls him back to present as he requests some chords from Quackity, who quickly obliges, and as the blond trails up and down octaves, Sapnap finds himself joining in and warming up his own voice, providing a tone-deeper harmony.

Quackity and Karl are tuning in moments later with their own melodies, and warmup dissolves into a fit of giggles as Quackity tries an exaggerated falsetto, and George scoffs behind a smile.

"Alright idiots, are you ready for soundcheck? Get to your instruments instead of cuddling and I'll

signal that we're ready to begin." He says eventually, and Karl scrambles up with an exaggerated salute at the drummer.

"Sir yes sir." The brunette calls before ducking under his guitar strap and shaking out his hair.

George just rolls his eyes again as Sapnap heads back to his own station, but not before Quackity winks at him.

He flushes as he hangs his bass over his body and runs a hand up and down the chords, before a voice is echoing through the speakers conducting them to start their first song.

It's not Sapnap's first sound check, and he doubts it will be the last, but it feels like something brand new, and honestly, it really is. Alongside balance and instrument volume, lights, and even video are being tested at the same time, something they'd never had the privilege of having for a show.

They hadn't requested anything crazy, and in all honesty, hadn't known what to do when given the option for lighting and video, but thanks to Karl's eye for production, he was able to give a basic idea to the lighting engineers that they took and ran with.

So, they had a light show on the docket that had looked like a different language when they were sent the finalized plot, and cameras set up for closeups and different angles.

It was neat to see his face magnified for audiences in the back, even for a mere moment as he plucked away at his bass, and by the time the check is over, the sun has just begun to set and the first of the crowd is filing into their seats.

Sapnap's heart thrums anticipatorily as a stage manager ushers them back behind a curtain while they allow the rest of the guests in, and as the five peek out from behind pitch black curtains, Sapnap can't hold back a grin.

"Holy shit." Quackity whispers breathlessly. He's taken to messing idly with Karl's fingers, and Sapnap watches the two as they stand next to each other, fidgeting ever so slightly as generic pop music plays from the speakers outside.

"They're gonna be here for *us*." Sapnap comments, and Karl nods at him giddily as a stage attendant shuffles by.

"About 10 minutes, boys." She says with a smile, and the 5 nod at her as she continues on.

The feeling from the competition is back, jelly in his legs and nerves in his blood, but instead of being shadowed by anger, and perhaps desperation, it's headlined by excitement and desire.

A slim hand reaches out to cup his own, and Sapnap follows the colorful sleeve up to find Karl grinning down at him. The rhythm guitarist tugs him forward for a brief hug, and as Sapnap lets himself relax a moment, "No worries." is whispered softly into his air and bolstered by a kiss.

He smiles as he pulls back and Dream motions to the group to crowd around him.

"Alright. We made it through the tough stuff, all that's left to do is wow the crowd. Which is easy." He says with a cocky smile that coaxes small giggles from the group. "We've got a set we've been practicing for weeks, and we've got each other. All we gotta do now is have fun."

His words are echoed with a wide smile, eyes shining and fond. "I don't care what happens out there as long as you have *fun*." The singer reaffirms.

“Fuck yeah.” Quackity replies, gaze soft but words punctuated and excited.

“Alright, on that note, who are we?” The chant is spurred into motion with Dream’s right hand extending into the center of the circle, sentimentality shifting to vivacity and determination as they 4 respond back enthusiastically.

“Feral Boys!” 2 more hands come to rest on the pile, thick bassist’s fingers contrasting the gentle strength of a drummer’s.

“I said, WHO ARE WE?” The final hands come to rest on the sturdy base, nails painted in swirls of color, one boasting rings of thin metal and the other rough with years of spirited playing.

“FERAL BOYS!” And this time it echoes across the backstage. When a manager motions to them to get ready to make their way behind the curtain, hands are lifted to the sky.

The stage is still dark as they approach their instruments, it’s a clumsy few seconds of squinting in the barely lit stage, attendants helping anyway they could before positions are confirmed and George’s mic goes live, starting the countdown.

“3, 2, 1-”

Oo-oo-oo!

The cheers from the crowd are immediate as the recognizable chords reverberate through the speakers surrounding the stage, and Sapnap feels the band come to life from the over-practiced chords and lyrics.

It’s easy, he thinks, to fall into the rhythm, and he reminds himself to thank George for putting this song first. It’s the perfect way to ease into performance, both for audience and for musicians, allowing for some incredible stage-play.

He thinks of Bowling For Soup’s live performances, grins, and plays it up from his place a little ways from Quackity, over-enunciating arm movements and moving in rhythm

The lead is, of course, fitting all the enthusiasm he can into performing while still giving Dream his head, hitting the notes with slight, theatrical exaggeration as they come into the chorus, making a spectacle of himself in the best way.

It feels just like when they performed it the first time, but bolstered by the wild whoops and hollers from the audience, the almost-there-almost-not fade of shouted lyrics, and the ease that only time and practice can give.

The vivacity of it still stands though, the energy from Quackity and the steadiness from Karl that had brung the song from good to great, and the fluidity that seemed too good to be true on a first run-through.

And as they reach the guitar solo before the bridge, Sapnap lets himself admire Quackity and think of how far this solo has come. Of how far *he’s* come.

The notes still remain mostly ad-libbed, but stay true to the original chord progression, and Sapnap listens as the crowd’s cheering becomes overwhelming, makeing eye-contact with Dream as the vocalist steps back to let Quackity have the lime-light.

Spotlights flash against tan skin and reflect off a navy blue Ibanez, and Sapnap is lost in the performance, fingers moving on sheer muscle memory. The bridge comes almost too soon, but he

backs Dream as they trail into the first of their many crowd-raising moments.

She hates time, make it stop

When did Mötley Crüe become classic rock? (Classic rock)

And when did Ozzy become an actor?

Please make this stop, stop, STOP!

And at the words stop, the music cuts off, drums halted and guitars silenced. Dream picks up the mic.

“Well good evening everyone.” He says, voice flowing smoothly out of the mic.

A slow murmur of ‘Good Evening’ is parroted back from the crowd, but mainly overruled with cheers. The stage is big enough that Sapnap can catch the slow smile cross Dream’s face, half obscured by bandana as he chuckles softly into the mic.

“Let me try that again. HOW’S EVERYONE DOIN’ TONIGHT?” This is met with a much more thunderous reply, cheers echoing around the stadium. “Some of you may know us, some of you may not, but whether you’ve been here since debut, or are just joining us now, you’ve seen us grow.”

A few scattered shouts push through the sea as Dream makes a nod towards original fans, and Sapnap swears one of them is Bad.

“Tonight we’ve got George on Drums!” Dream motions towards the back where George sits, the brunette twirling his drumsticks in some complicated maneuver before waving in the direction of the audience. Sapnap murmurs ‘Showoff’ fondly under his breath and hopes the mic doesn’t pick it up.

“Sapnap on Bass!” He takes the moment of highlight on himself to wink at the crowd, waving with a bright smile that fades into a smirk as he pantomimes playing his guitar, catching his actions on the jumbo-tron opposite himself.

“Karl on Rhythm Guitar and Keyboard!” A small wave with both hands from Karl follows as his Les Pauls hangs loose around his neck, a small ‘Hi’ spoken into the mic in front of him. Someone in the audience screams ‘I love you!’ and Sapnap snickers.

“Quackity on Lead Guitar!” And in true Quackity fashion, he takes the time to lay out a complicated, brief, and entirely effervescent improv, followed by a greeting.

“Evening everyone!” A small cheer sounds back.

“And finally, you’ve got me, Dream, on Vocals. Thanks for joining us out here tonight we are the Feral Boys, so let’s *bring back-*”

The music picks up again as Dream cues the lead in to the final chorus of the song

Springsteen, Madonna, way before Nirvana,

There was U2 and Blondie,

And music still on MTV,

Her two kids, in high school,

They tell her that she’s uncool,

Cause she’s still, preoccupied...

With 1985

Karl takes up singing the echoing vocals repeating the bridge in the background while Quackity and Karl continue the supporting ‘Oo-oo-oo!’s behind Dream’s lead.

As the song fades to a close, the applause is overwhelming, the crowd seeming to move as members stand from their seats and jump, and the sheer energy from the song finishing to the crowd roaring makes Sapnap grin as he takes a swig of water.

“Well shit if they liked that one they’re gonna go crazy for what we’ve got next.” Quackity comments with a laugh into his mic that has the audience going even crazier.

Unlike the last time they had performed, there’s time for banter, there’s time for play, and the group has allotted for it, has planned for minutes spared between songs and forethought given for moments spent buttering up a new audience, convincing them to stay.

Now, as they get ready to hit the crowd with another classic, is one of those moments.

“You said it.” Sapnap comments back, as he plucks out some notes on his base that sound vaguely similar to the first riffs of ‘American Idiot’. Some people in the crowd seem to pick up on it as a resounding ‘FUCK YEAH!’ echoes from the back. “Someone got it.” Sapnap replies with a grin.

“Oh just give away our whole set now, why don’t you.” George comments from the drums, and Sapnap lets loose an exaggerated breath into the mic.

“Oh Georgie, it was just a bit of fun.” He quips back as Quackity and Karl both giggle.

“Speaking of ‘fun’, talk about an audience!” Karl segues, motioning his hands towards the gathering of people before them. “I’m convinced our audience tonight is the best audience, for a number of reasons.”

“Oh yeah?” Dream asks. “Give us some.”

“Well, for starters, they’re here with us-” Karl has to pause at the wave of sound the crowd lets loose. “-and for more, one of them said they love me, and honestly, that makes them the most incredible audience.”

A cheer that sounds similar in pitch to the voice that screamed earlier crosses the distance, and the crowd chuckles as Karl points in the general direction. “See? Incredible.”

“Alright, alright, enough of inflating Karl’s ego, we’ve got, what, 9 more songs to get through?” Dream pipes up, glancing back at George.

The drummer nods as the audience cheers again, and Sapnap had never realized just how much that happens. At practically every word, even vague mentions, someone would call out from the mass of blurred faces, and Sapnap finds himself more and more endeared with every one.

“It’s ok, you guys can inflate my ego after.” Karl promises with a wink as Quackity laughs and starts the intro to ‘American Idiot’.

There’s something about performing live that really does make performing so much easier, Sapnap reckons, and he remembers the first time they had performed this as a group.

In fact, it had even been the first song they’d played all together, and the absolute reward that comes with being able to perform it now, live, and in person, seems surreal.

No longer is the sound restrained in studio walls, instead echoing from speakers taller than Sapnap,

hell, taller than *Dream*, and as the lead guitar solo comes up in this song, Dream works the crowd, hyping them up to hype Quackity in a way that's so much more than practice has ever been.

He's got the crowd screaming 'Hey!' in time with the drums and riff switches from Quackity's end, the taller's hands bringing the crowd up as he adds his own support to the chant.

Quackity is, of course, adding his own personal flair, but doing it flawlessly as George supports him on drums, and finally Karl gets the spray of colorful lights on himself to lead them into the bridge.

*Don't wanna be an American idiot,
One nation controlled by the media,
Information age of hysteria,
It's calling out to-*

And Dream goes silent with the instrumentals to let the audience fill in the blank, which they do, and a heavy chant of 'Idiot America!' is repeated back in almost perfect timing with the original song.

They jump back into the music and finish the song to more resounding cheers, letting the audience simmer as they hydrate before continuing.

Quackity whoops into the mic as the cheers continue, and Dream picks up his own mic after swiping some sweat from his face with the back of his hand.

"You guys sounded amazing!" He compliments the audience. "Couldn't have done it without you."

"Yeah, because I'll bet you forgot the words." George teases from behind and the crowd laughs at his quip.

"I did not forget the *words* George." He replies, and as Dream turns his back to the drummer once more, George takes the moment to nod and mouth 'He totally did' into the camera.

The crowd laughs again and Dream just rolls his eyes.

"Come on Dream, 'American Idiot' was the title of the song, not a suggestion for how to act." Quackity retorts with a grin, and Dream just huffs into the mic.

"Ok, ok, next song, come on George." Dream finally goads, and Sapnap takes pity on his friend, whooping the intro to 'James Dean' as Quackity backs him on lead in riffs.

Doing covers has been fun, but it's nothing compared to being able to perform your own song live, watching the audience be introduced to something entirely new and jamming along to it too.

*Imagine for a minute,
You wake up in the morning
And get what you want*

And of course, being their own work, Sapnap notices Dream seems more comfortable getting into it, stalking across the stage as he lowers down to run his hands across the arms reaching up towards them.

The song lends itself to easily exaggerated facial motions that their lead vocalist takes advantage of as the cameras focus on him and he finally rights himself, encouraging the audience to clap in time

to the chorus of the song.

*I'm no James Dean
Heartthrob daydream
Bad hair, black jeans
Not cool suits me*

*Girls won't date me
Guys all hate me
Guess that must mean
I'm no James Dean*

They do, easily so, and it feels too quick as 'James Dean' begins to wind down. Somehow the cheers feel like they get even more deafening as they do the final lines of the song, and as the music cuts for Dream to say 'I'm no James Dean' one last time, Sapnap can't help but look forward to performing more of their original works.

If Sapnap had been nervous about performing their group's stuff live before, he's not now as the audience cries out resoundfully, and for a moment, all he can hear is the whoops and hollers from the people in front of them.

It's insane, infectious, and makes Sapnap grin ear to ear around the neck of his water bottle.

"If you're wondering why you don't recognize the song you just heard, that would be because this is an original work written by myself and George back there." Dream comments as the cheers begin to wane.

"Excuse me? Those guitar chords didn't come out of nowhere, and they certainly didn't come from you." Sapnap chimes in, knowing damn well how long he and George had spent puzzling over tabs and progressions.

Dream shoots him a grin. "I guess our bassist had some say in it too." The vocalist eventually concedes as the audience chuckle at the playful banter.

"Yeah, yeah, keep talking and next song's gonna be all drums." Sapnap threatens with no real intent.

"Anyways, we've got 3 more original songs planned for tonight's set, and if you like them and wanna hear them again, some older recordings are up on our soundcloud-"

"But!" Sapnap cuts in, talking over Dream. "We've got plans to release an EP as soon as we can, so make sure to follow our social medias to stay tuned." He says with a wink, and the crowd responds with bright cheers.

"Alright, enough selling out, let's get back to the music, 3, 2, 1,-" George gives them barely any time to recover before cuing Karl to begin the intro who, luckily, had been ready at his signal.

Dream finishes his swig of water with a flourish as Quackity and Sapnap start the ever iconic lyrics of 'Stacy's Mom', Dream eventually joining them with the melody.

The song moves far more quickly than 'James Dean', and they're at the second chorus before Sapnap can even comprehend it, but the audience is infectious, and Dream is really building them up.

It's easy to get the crowd to sing along to the lyrics, and they do so enthusiastically, bolstering the

chorus with more voices that have Sapnap grinning through the words he's singing into the mic.

*And I know that you think
it's just a fantasy,
But since your dad walked out your mom could use a guy like me-*

*Stacy's Mom
Has got it goin' on,
She's all I want, and I've waited for so long,*

*Stacy can't you see, you're just not the girl for me,
I know it might be wrong, but I'm in love with Stacy's mom*

And on the accompanying 'Ah's in the background, Sapnap and Quackity go back to back before the shorter takes the head on the short solo before the lead out.

Dream takes this time to get the audience clapping in time, talking over the solo to hype up the crowd.

"Come on guys, sing along, you know it!" He encourages, and as Sapnap, Quackity, and Karl head the lead out, they have the entire audience backing them with claps and lyrics.

Dream takes the lead with the overlapping vocals, and as he says the last lyrics, and Quackity gives an improved riff on his guitar to end it.

"Nothing beats a classic like that." Quackity says into his mic, and Sapnap nods from his place next to him.

"Oh absolutely." He agrees as he swipes some stray hair from his face. He gives himself a moment to indulge in Quackity's eyes on him, the sharp midnight sparkling under the stagelights before the shorter is winking at him and turning back towards the audience.

"Except for maybe another Feral Boys original!" Karl chimes in from across the stage with a grin that brings Sapnap back from his momentary stupor to look at his other partner across the stage.

"TRUE!" Him and Quackity reply in tandem as Karl checks the setting on his keyboard before playing a warped intro, George backing on drums before Dream begins the lyrics and Karl switches to a far more floaty setting.

*In the bathroom, on my back
There's a picture on the wall of Kanye West
He's staring at me, he's staring at me
I'm freaking out, I'm freaking out*

The energy from 'Stacy's Mom' probably isn't quite reached, but 'Freakin' Out' is an arguably more mellow tune, a sort of 'bridge' between their songs to give audience members a taste of their range and a moment to relax a little.

And indeed, the crowd seems to sway in time, focusing more on subtle dancing than participating in singing, though some more dedicated members still try their best to shout the unfamiliar lyrics.

It's oddly endearing, Sapnap reckons, as they reach the bridge of the song, and Karl is doing overtime on the keyboard while Dream repeats the lyrics in what feels like a desperate mantra, much like how the song was intended to be performed.

*I'm all alone afraid of my life
I just want a home
Wouldn't that be nice
I'm all alone afraid of my life
I just want a home
Wouldn't that be nice
I'm all alone afraid of my life
I just want a home
Wouldn't that be nice*

The song requires less crazy guitar antics from Quackity who takes the time to cover more where rhythm guitar might have been, taking a stand back from fancy showmanship to work on the technical side.

And as they reach the final chorus, Dream does succeed in getting most of the audience to yell out 'I FEEL FINE!' as Sapnap, Quackity, and Karl back him until the end of the song, sing-screaming into the mic before Karl plays his repeat pattern for the outro and the music finally cuts.

"I know I feel fine after that performance." Quackity cracks with a smile that has the rest of the band members groaning into their mics.

"Duuuude." Sapnap moans with mock disappointment as Quackity continues to laugh at his own joke despite the protests of his band members.

"I saw the opportunity and I took it, I could also give us the perfect lead into the next song if you let me." He offers with a wolfish grin, mischief in his eyes.

"Well, good thing I'm not letting you." George says, making the four other members laugh as the drummer.

It's strange, to have this banter on stage, a long nearly forgotten art Sapnap hasn't been given the chance to enjoy.

But as Quackity and George bicker, and the group laughs around him, he finds himself lost in the moment.

Lost in his partners' eyes.

Lost in Quackity's bright smile, lost in Karl's soft giggle, and lost in the humor of his friends.

It's a good place to be, and his heart bubbles with excitement and love for the members around him as they prepare for the next song.

Chapter End Notes

Hope you guys enjoyed that first half, we've got a couple more songs to go in pt 2, but I figured some SapNotFound bonding would be a fun treat to add on top for the meantime.

NOW, for the votes from last chapter! I've calculated the results of what the next fic will be both from the twitter poll and by individually counting every vote on the last

chapter and you guys are getting.... HOGWARTS AU! So, that's the next project where Update days will be not only shifting to Wednesday instead of Sunday, but will be more spaced out (around 2 weeks is what I'm shooting for)

Make sure to follow me on [twitter](#) for updates and more

As always, leave your kudos and comments, I reply to as many as I can, but definitely read them all and they make my day <3

Best, and see you soon (hopefully)

Cure :)

Favorite Liar PT 2

Chapter Summary

Sunset concludes, but not before a final tribulation

Chapter Notes

I'VE RETURNED FROM THE WAR!

And by war, I mean college, and by college I mean finals and Writer's block... BUT I AM HERE NOW, to finish what I started before the year's out, and deliver to you the grand finale you've all be so very patiently waiting for.

I am more than excited to finally finish this work, and I do hope you all enjoy the chapter (and epilogue uhu), and make sure to stick around for my other works! I do still intend to write, but can't promise a consistent upload schedule. Evidently, in-person college is more intensive than online high school. Who knew? (this is sarcasm)

In the meantime, check out my [twitter](#) where I am still (mostly) active and make some BANGER tweets guys.

Of course, you can also check out the accompanying [playlist](#) featuring every song mentioned and more!

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I'd also like to bring to attention some of the amazing art I've gotten for this fic!

@blacle_paka on [twitter](#) and [instagram](#) with this [GORGEOUS work of the boys during practice](#)

and @wertbzjdbjsd on [twitter](#) and [instagram/@44bugs](#) on tumblr with this [beautiful collection of sketches of the fiances' designs!](#)

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That's all for this note, enjoy the chapter, and thank you so very much for waiting <3

-

BETA'd once, please tell me I've still got it

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The euphoria of a live performance is a thrilling amalgamation of feelings and ambitions coming to fruition in the arena of a stage, and it's something Sapnap decides he'd rather die than live without.

They're at a brief break between songs, Dream is bantering with George while Karl chimes in with his own clever quips and Sapnap takes a moment to reflect, to take a step back.

They're almost through with their set, he realizes, as the adrenaline ebbs in favor of allowing

Sapnap a moment to simply *breathe*.

One more song.

One more song and it's over, the stage, the people, the crowd, the cheers, the *feeling*. It's over. For now.

But there's still one more song to get through, one more chance to show off in front of a crowd until the next underground performance Bad gets them, and Sapnap snaps back into existence as the bantering behind him fades and George starts cueing them in for the final song.

The final song that isn't theirs, but that George had *insisted* be last, and that the group had agreed upon easily, a final fuck you to Wilbur, and to anyone else who had burned them on their path to this moment.

The song is recognizable too, and the audience falls in time with it as the beginning notes are played, catching on quick and clapping without Dream even needing to encourage them.

Dream leads the way with powerful vocals as the first words of the song lead to the iconic lines in the first refrain, a perfect way to end a pretty perfect set.

*When you see my face,
Hope it gives you hell,
hope it gives you hell.*

*When you walk my way,
Hope it gives you hell,
Hope it gives you hell*

It's personal, sure, and as Sapnap pictures Wilbur's face in the crowd somewhere, he imagines himself playing right in the vocalist's face as the chords progress and the song continues.

The words themselves may not be entirely accurate, and sure, it's more of a lost-love song than a band break-up song, but the energy stays the same, and as they reach the height of the music, electric guitar spiking for a harder hitting chorus, Sapnap finds he doesn't really care either way.

He and Quackity back Dream up with 'Ooos' and parroted words a beat or so later, but it's cathartic in a way as they play what's easily an All-American Reject's essential but have it mean something to them, too.

*And truth be told, I miss you
And truth be told,
I'm lying!*

When the chorus comes, and the beat finally drops, the entire band is singing the lyrics into the mics set up in front of them, the audience joining in with a universal song of self-proclamation and catharticism.

They're performing it with as much energy as they can for a slower moving song, but it's easy to catch the rhythm and bolster it with their own flair as they approach the bridge, Dream singing slowly, making exaggerated facial expressions before eventually pausing.

He pulls the mic from his face, and besides the bass notes Sapnap plays and the rhythm George is keeping on the drums, it's just the crowd in front of them screaming the lyrics loud enough to be heard on stage, even over the distance.

*When you see my face, hope it gives you hell, hope it gives you hell
When you walk my way, hope it gives you hell, hope it gives you hell
If you find a man that's worth a damn and treats you well
Then he's a fool, you're just as well, hope it gives you hell*

The guitars come back in after, but the audience doesn't stop, the four behind Dream joining the audience as the singer begins the lead out.

*When you hear this song, and you sing along
But you never tell
Then you're the fool,
I'm just as well, hope it gives you hell!
When you hear this song, I hope that it will give you hell*

The energy is high, Quackity is practically jumping as he strums the main chords and shouts the lyrics, and Sapnap isn't far off from the same.

George slams the drums with a passion as Karl punches his strings with vigor, a perfect symphony of energy and pent-up feelings finally given a sweet release.

They're giving it their all, abandoning mics in favor of simply screaming back to the audience below them, and when the final hit of guitar fades to let the final word be sung, Sapnap thinks Dream's voice has never sounded so sickently sweet.

*You can sing along, I hope that it puts you through
Hell.*

When the song finally fades, and the cheers roar, Sapnap inhales the sharp and sweet air of the stage, living in this moment as much as he can, because this is it. This is the biggest stage they'll be on for a while, but it's theirs until they leave, and Sapnap clings tight to the feeling.

His thoughts are far from previous struggles, far from thoughts of tremulous pasts, shifting band members, and shitty exes, focused only on finding this feeling *again* and *again* in the future.

So when he feels Dream sidle close to him, whispering a panicked sentence, his heart drops, a pit after a peak.

"We have 10 more minutes to fill, and no songs." It's a cold bucket of water dumped on flushed, heated skin, a rude wak-up.

Quackity is next to Sapnap as well, clearly aware of the situation, and thank god for George and Karl as they distract the crowd from the tense conversation happening left stage.

"What do we do? We can't end early?" Sapnap replies, and Dream's eyes shift to the side.

"Technically, we can, but it's kinda unprofessional. I mean, 5 minutes is an acceptable time, but 10?" The singer shakes his head as Sapnap runs a hand down his face

"Well, what can we do? We don't have any other songs to perform, and we can't fill 5-10 minutes with chatter. It might be better to just end here, it's not like we're total professionals anyways." Sapnap says with a shrug. "It's probably forgivable?"

Dream stays quiet, but seems to be considering more alternatives, trying to pull a solution from thin-air.

Sapnap sighs. It's not like he wants to leave early either, and if they knew any more songs, even a cover, he'd suggest it now. As it stands though, it's looking like the best option is to leave.

Quackity has been quiet, but his brow is furrowed as he concentrates on a solution too. It's a moment before he speaks, but when he does, Sapnap and Dream listen carefully.

"How good are you guys at sight-reading?"

The bassist and singer share a look before nodding with a small shrug assessing their abilities.

"Pretty good, I mean, we can't learn songs without being passable at it, so." Sapnap replies, and Dream nods in agreement

"Ok, good, follow up, how good are you guys at improv?" Quackity continues, as he slides his guitar up and over his head.

"Now that we've got down pat." Dream assures, and Quackity nods, Sapnap still endlessly curious as to what the lead is planning.

"Good, because I've got an original I was gonna share with you guys later in my bag backstage right now. I have 2 copies, and only a written drum-line, leadline, and lyrics." Quackity says. He turns to Sapnap. "If you and Karl can pull together a bassline and secondary guitar line out of improv, based upon my chords, then we might just be able to pull off something just a little crazy."

"Wait, are you suggesting performing an entire song we haven't even heard? And- Hang on, only two copies? Who are you gonna give them to?" Dream asks, running a worried hand through his hair.

"You and George. You need the lyrics, George needs the drums and tempo, but I don't need the music at all. It's my leadline. If Karl and Sapnap can pick up the pattern and make their own lines, they won't need music either." Quackity explains. "You guys said you were good at improv, I've got the bare minimum, so I think it might be possible to make something awesome."

"And you really think we can do this?" Dream confirms.

"You tell me, but Karl and George can only hold the audience for so much longer." Quackity says. Dream and Sapnap share a brief look before nodding at each other, and then at Quackity.

"We can do it." Dream replies, and Quackity grins.

"Awesome. Stall the audience while I grab the music, won't be more than a minute, I'll let Karl and George know on my way back, got it?"

The two nod as Quackity hands his guitar to Sapnap and starts skipping back upstage towards George, and to his music.

Karl and George are doing some weird call and response rhythm thing where George plays a pattern on the drums that Karl imitates on his guitar, and it seems to be getting a decent response from the audience, so Sapnap can't really mind.

George spares a brief look to Quackity as he approaches but continues his conversation with Karl first.

"That was nowhere near the rhythm I just played, Karl." George says, unimpressed.

“You’re crazy, it was exactly the same!” The guitarist replies, and even though Sapnap has no previous context for the sound, he’ll never miss a chance to say George is wrong. It’s also the perfect way to grab the attention off of George so Quackity can inform the drummer of the set-change.

“I think it was pretty accurate, right Dream?” He says, as the lead-guitarist reaches George, whispers something briefly, and scoots to Karl to do the same.

Dream nods. “I think so too... Sorry George, you’re outnumbered.” The singer says with a smile as George is able to re-enter the conversation once more.

“What’s new?” George deadpans, resting his chin in his hand as the four remaining onstage chuckle, and Dream segues into the next topic.

“You might have noticed our lead guitarist scurrying backstage, and that’s because Quackity’s preparing our special surprise for you guys tonight.” Dream starts, and the audience murmurs in front of him.

“That’s right, we know we said our last song would be the previous cover we performed for you, but we may have lied a little so our surprise would be, well, a surprise.” Sapnap continues. The crowd gives a few scattered claps.

“Before we get into that though, we just want to take this time to thank you guys again for being such an amazing crowd tonight.” Dream says with a bright smile.

“Absolutely incredible, couldn’t have asked for a better one.” Karl jumps in with frantic agreement.

“If you’ve liked what you’ve heard so far, feel free to follow us on our social medias to keep up with the band and-”

“To see when we’re dropping our first EP! It’s gonna be awesome.” Sapnap can’t help but to cut Dream off, and it garners some laughs from the crowd.

“What Sapnap said,” Dream says with a small laugh of his own. Sapnap subtly nods towards the curtain where Quackity is re-emerging from, papers in his hands as he gives some to George and continues downstage. “Now, you may be wondering what we’ve got in store for you as our final song tonight and-”

“We’re gonna see how the Feral Boys can handle a Quackity original!” Quackity says, stealing Dream’s mic as he hands him the sheet music. He returns to his own station, and continues his description. “Now, this may crash and burn, but it could also go epically, and we just figured we’d give it a shot. You have before you a band who’s worked incredibly hard on learning the songs you’ve heard tonight, but as a fun little challenge for ourselves, we decided to try a song that’s only ever been seen by one pair of eyes and heard by one pair of ears: Mine.”

The crowd gasps, but claps slowly fill the stadium, cheers and whoops following behind.

“Now, we understand this might shatter your faith in us, so we’ve made it a fun little bet for you guys too.” Quackity continues, voice emphasized for dramatic effect, and Sapnap just lets him talk, pushing the nerves aside in favor of trusting his lead. “If we totally fail this, you get to yell ‘What the fuck, Feral Boys!’ as loud as you can at us, alright?”

The crowd seems to like this, applauding and hollering in reply, and Sapnap supposes who wouldn’t enjoy a free pass to yell ‘fuck’ at a band.

“But!” Quackity says, disrupting the cheers, “But, but, but...” The crowd quiets once more. “If we absolutely, incredibly, astoundingly, *nail* it, or as close to nailing it as we can, you have to promise you’ll stick with us past this concert.”

The audience stays quiet.

“And yell ‘Fuck yeah, Feral Boys!’ instead.” The crowd goes wild again and Sapnap finds himself easing into the energy, as George gives a small thumbs up from behind them. “Well, let’s see what happens when you combine four idiots who’ve never even heard this song played with one idiot who knows it by heart, LET’S GO!”

It’s rough. Quackity’s leadline is the only decent thing about it so far, solid as Dream hesitantly waits for his cue before beginning to sing.

*I remember going
Out to see the big rocks
Went without you knowing,
Hope you’re not too mad I go alot.
I go alot.*

There’s a strange silence and awkwardness about them as Karl and himself nod their head to the rhythm, trying to find the pattern in the chords Quackity is playing and an appropriate place to jump in.

George is studying the music as he evidently isn’t needed to drum yet, and for a moment, Sapnap thinks this is where it crashes and burns, and everything they’ve worked for falls apart.

But then Karl picks up the repeating line Quackity had been carrying, leaving the lead free to add a stronger layer of guitar, and George’s drums start tying the two together while bolstering Dream’s slowly growing confidence in his singing.

It’s starting to sound good, like an actual song, and with the three of them playing in tune, Sapnap finally finds his bass-line, and begins to follow the established pattern as it falls into place in his mind.

When the first drop hits, Dream’s voice has that characteristic energy he’s known for, and Sapnap watches him grab the mic with the hand not gripping the sheet music as the energy pitches forward.

They’re getting it now, feeling it, as Quackity leads them forward, and the four start falling in rhythm, loosening up with the music, and starting to let go.

It’s not about being perfect, it’s improv, it’s close enough, it’s having fun, it’s energy, and it’s keeping the crowd engaged as the song pushes forward in perfectly imperfect time.

As Sapnap finds his way, fingers registering the bass-line he’s developed, he takes a moment to listen to the lyrics Dream’s singing with his whole heart, to appreciate what Quackity’s written.

*I remember weekends,
Fightin over everything
And I can almost taste it,
The bloody lip you left with me that night

Kiss me one last time.*

The lyrics spark a fire in the pit of Sapnap’s stomach as he connects the dots from previous

conversations, Quackity's allusions to Schlatt, and his discomfort around the slimy singer. He'll have to ask how much of the song is fact and how much is fiction, but given the fire with which Quackity is singing backup, he assumes it's pretty damn close to an accurate relayance of his ex.

Sapnap steps up next to Quackity, as they play, observing the lead as he puts the full amount of his passion into the hands curling around the neck of his Ibanez, recognizing the heart and soul he's pouring into the song.

In true Quackity fashion, Sapnap's not sure which parts of the song are what was actually written on the sheet music, and what parts Quackity was stretching on his strings, but it doesn't matter as he sidles next to him, shoulder to shoulder in silent support.

Quackity catches Sapnap's eye in his peripherals, and as he sings some backup for Dream, bolstering his voice, there's a softness in them, what Sapnap believes to be a silent thanks.

When Quackity pulls back to let Dream fully take over, the singer finding his groove and engaging the crowd, there's a hushed 'Thank you' barely caught over the din of the crowd.

Sapnap smiles as they play their instruments back to back, and in a way all too similar to long practice sessions in soundproof rooms, they're cheek to cheek as they sing into the mic.

The bridge comes easily, albeit mildly sloppily as they catch onto the shift in intensity, relying on Quackity guiding them through.

The rhythmic punches in the music are contrasted by the continuous singing in Dream's delivery, a perfect calm from the chaos and anger in the main chorus, that's slowly building to a finale that will be hard to forget.

*I've got room to grow
I know I'm missin home
But you think I'm alone
And I think you should know*

*That I've got pretty girls
Yeah I've got pretty girls taking me home*

There's a slow stretch the group falls into as the tempo slows briefly before picking up and returning to the previous pace, the final punch to the anger of a perfect breakup song, and Sapnap *sees* the intensity in Quackity's frame as he screams along the words with Dream.

And the *lyrics*.

Sapnap feels his heart ache as Quackity sings backup with the most passion he's seen from him since they've met, and that's saying something, given the bassist's enthusiasm while playing.

*Cast me into you fire, your fire
Cause I will never be less than what you want
I've got good news, I'm heading off
To start a fire*

A fire

This song isn't just a break-up song, it's *Quackity's* break up song, a self-realization of his own worth, and acceptance of the toxicity of his previous relationship. It's moving on, but remembering the good times, it's the pain of lost and loathesome love, and it's *invigorating*.

It comes to a peak as Dream nearly screams the final lyrics, picking up on the fire Quackity harnessed to write it, as the group follows with a flare of their own.

*You're such a liar,
My favorite liar*

The song slows once more for the outro, a mirror of the intro, and Sapnap watches Quackity walk downstage with his mic, up to Dream, hesitant, but sure.

Quackity pats him on the shoulder, and Sapnap watches their lead give way for Quackity to sing the final verse, a small thank you for saving their asses on the set and a chance to let Quackity feel his own music.

It's only him now, on vocals and guitar, plucking the final notes as he sings with his whole heart. The four behind him stare at him with silent support and hardly concealed fondness as he takes them home, voice rich and soulful.

*I remember waking up in Colorado
You said that it was raining
I tried to hide away, but you said 'No'
You made me love the rain.*

Quackity's playing fades out as the crowd goes wild, and the four band mates abandon their posts to surround Quackity downstage flooding him with hugs, and from his two partners, the occasional sneaky cheek kiss.

The cheering is overwhelming as Quackity giggles loud enough to be picked up on the mic still gripped in his hand, and the faint whoops and hollers from the Feral Boys drift in and out of boosted volume.

"SO! Audience, I think there's a clear answer for how we did up here, and as promised, I wanna hear you scream as loud as you can how you think we did," Quackity says, breathless into the mic. "On the count of 3, ready? 1, 2, 3-"

And barely a moment past Quackity reaching 3, the crowd is overwhelmingly shouting "FUCK YEAH, FERAL BOYS!" at the top of their lungs.

It's the perfect way to end their set, and Sapnap steers the mic towards his mouth to yell "WE'VE BEEN THE FERAL BOYS!" As the whoops in front of and behind him get louder.

"Thank you so much for coming out tonight, everyone." Dream adds on as a final note before they begin walking backwards towards curtain covered privacy, waving to the crowd as they do.

When their audience is no longer visible, and their cheers are hushed by the fall of sound-dampening fabric, the five collapse into chairs around the backstage area, letting their instruments get carried away into stands as water bottles are shoved into their hands.

It won't be like this every time, Sapnap knows, the stage attendants are here for the festival, but he doesn't mind it now as he slumps against Karl beside him and chugs his water.

"Holy shit." He exclaims, breathing ragged as adrenaline fades. Karl giggles breathlessly from next to him and Sapnap can feel the harsh rise and fall of his chest, too.

"We just performed in front of so many people." His partner responds, giddy from fading energy.

“We *improvvved* an *entire* song in front of so many people.” Sapnap emphasizes, earning another breathless giggle and tandem groans and sighs from the others.

“Speaking of, you guys did great. Performed my vision pretty damn accurately!” Quackity pipes up from Sapnap’s other side.

He reaches out his hand for Quackity’s, which the other grants easily, vying for contact.

“Fuck your ex, man.” He says, squeezing his partner’s hand for emphasis.

Quackity laughs. “Yeah, *fuck* my ex.”

The group joins in with their own laughter as they finally begin to settle down, exhaustion ripping through their joints and replacing the high of performance.

“It’s a pretty good song, Quackity. I definitely think we should refine it more so we can add it to our performance roster.” George says, resting his water bottle between his legs.

“Yeah? I was telling Dream, I was gonna pitch it to you guys when we got back, but,” he shrugs. “Figured if you guys could bullshit your way through a brand new song, we might as well try that for the last ten minutes.”

George huffs a laugh as he takes another swig of water, and gets to his feet.

“I think I saw them moving my drum set back to the van, I want to make sure they didn’t mess her up at all.” George says, and Sapnap knows it’s more for the benefit of the stage managers to allow them to start dismantling the set than for actual fear of his drum’s status.

The four reply with scattered agreements as they shift into standing, grabbing instruments and following after George as they make their way back to the quiet of the parking lot.

The summer air still sings, and Sapnap feels like he can hear every song and melody in the cicada calls as Quackity holds his hand on one side and Karl grips his arm on the other.

The van waits patiently in the same spot she was before they started, and sure enough, George’s drums have been carefully loaded onto the bed. The four remaining place their guitars and mics in the respective places before flopping into whatever seat’s available, whether it’s the milk crates used for holding stray coords or the couple of lawn chairs Dream had been smart enough to set up.

Karl chooses the grass at Sapnap’s feet, leaning his head back against the bassist’s knees as George passes around some celebratory drinks.

“To an incredible performance.” He toasts, and the four repeat the words back to him before clinking their glasses together and taking a deep swig.

When they arrive back to the apartment, they waste no time hooking up the speakers to someone’s phone, Sapnap can’t care to remember whose, lost in the simple joy of celebration with his closest friends as they sing to Fall Out Boy and MCR, and simply *live*.

Snacks get poured somewhere along the line, drinks as well, and when they’re finally too tired to dance and sing, a movie is put on TV that no-one pays attention to.

Sapnap doesn’t know how the 5 of them make it to their respective rooms, but all he does know is

he ends up on the bed in Quackity's room, caught in a sleepy cuddle pile slurring through mindless thoughts in a half-assed conversation.

It's quiet, and Sapnap has forgotten whose leg is whose and which arm is slung around his middle vs which grasps his hand, sleep-drunk as the digital alarm clock on the bedside table reads almost 3AM.

Karl's wormed his way inbetween Quackity and Sapnap, cradled in the middle of their cuddle pile, and almost sound asleep, save for the occasional hum of acknowledgement to the conversation Sapnap's barely managing to hold with his other partner.

"I didn't think any paint job would fix her, but I figured it out, n' she's brand new." Quackity slurs, words heavy with sleep as Sapnap makes a small noise in response.

"Whad'you do when it rains?" He asks, and Quackity snorts as he shifts to catch Sapnap's eyes over the fluff of brown hair between them.

"Rain jacket." Is the simple response he gets, and a laugh rumbles softly in Sapnap's throat.

"Thas' it? Man, you're crazy." He replies, squeezing their joined hands together in emphasis. Quackity just giggles. "My kinda crazy though."

"Yeah?" Quackity says, eyes soft in the silver moonlight shining through the window.

"Yeah." There's a beat of silence as Sapnap yawns, and he's halfway to falling asleep, lulled by the warmth of Karl against his front and Quackity's hand carefully holding his own before he remembers his earlier questions regarding the song Quackity had them perform. "Hey, how much of that song-"

"Favorite Liar."

"Yeah, how much of that was like. *Real*, real." He asks, and Quackity hums thoughtfully.

"Pretty much all of it. Some events were, like, switched around or whatever, chronologically, but they all happened." Sapnap sits up a little, conscious of Karl against his chest, but suddenly awake.

"The bloody lip line-"

"Yeah." It's said somewhat softly, and Quackity's eyes seem to glitter with an unspoken sadness. Sapnap's gut twists as anger replaces tiredness.

"He hurt you." It's not a question at this point, it's a statement that Quackity shrugs to.

"Just the once. He was more about verbal abuse, and like... saying shit, but one time," Quackity pauses to huff, and Sapnap removes his hand from his partner's to cup his face and run a thumb across the apple of his cheek.

"You don't have to say anything if you don't want to." He assures, and Quackity nods.

"I know, but it's fine. I'm pretty much over it." Quackity pulls his hand up to cup Sapnap's on his face. "Anyways, one time we were arguing, and he was saying shit, and I was saying shit, and I was so *tired* of it all, I just didn't hold anything back, ya know?"

Sapnap nods.

"So I didn't. I said *everything*, and he didn't like that so he just," Quackity mimes a punch with his

free hand before settling it back down. "I think that's when I really realized he was a shitty boyfriend, and I needed to end it."

"I'm gonna to kill him." Sapnap says deadpan, and Quackity huffs a soft laugh.

"You're gonna have to get in line, baby." The guitarist replies.

"Yeah, after me n' everyone n' like, George too, I think." A sleepy voice pipes up from between them, and Karl reaches up to kiss Quackity's chin before settling back down. "We're not gonna do that, ever, promise." He sighs before snuggling back into Quackity's chest.

Sapnap and Quackity watch, bemused at their boyfriend's half-awake musings before laughing softly into the dark of the room, Sapnap leaning closer across the space between them until their foreheads touch.

Their laughs die down, giving way to another breath of silence before Sapnap speaks once more.

"He's right, you know. We're not."

Quackity hums in reply, soft and slow, wicked eyes concealed behind a soft curtain of skin as his eyes flutter shut.

"I know." Sapnap smiles before placing a careful kiss on Quackity's forehead and another on the crest of Karl's head before finally settling in for the night, gathering Karl closer and reaching across him to hold Quackity's hand again.

"Good. 'Night Hot Wheels." He says, and he doesn't need his eyes to be open to see the soft smile crawling across Quackity's scar-kissed mouth.

"'Night Four-String."

And as sleep claims his aching body, a decrescendo from the day's activities, he wonders just how lucky he is to be here, sharing a bed with two of the most important people in his life, watching a future become visible on the measures ahead in the sheet music of his story.

Harmonies join the melody, quarter notes dance with eighth notes and rests in good pitch, and everything is perfectly, wonderfully, so in tune.

Chapter End Notes

And there it is!

But, it's not over yet... you've got an epilogue to get through ;)

For you patience, I have rewarded you with two updates in one, so I hope you enjoy that as well!

I do plan on writing the Hogwarts AU I have planned, but again, with irregular updates as I will be starting my second semester...

Anyways, I hope you enjoyed, a longer farewell note will be at the end of the epilogue, but for now, thank you so much for reading!

As always, please leave you kudos and comments, I try to reply to everyone I can, but I do read them all and and they mean the world to me.

Make sure to follow me on [twitter](#) to stay updated with what I'm doing, and I'll see you guys soon!

-Cure

EPILOGUE

Chapter Summary

Almost a year later, and the Feral Boys are popping off as always

Chapter Notes

And here we are!
The actual finale!

I hope you guys have enjoyed this work as much as I've enjoyed writing it, it truly has been an incredible journey that I am so honored to have made with all of you. From color-changing spoons to getting everyone I can into the Wrecks, I've loved every second of writing and producing this piece!

Thank you all so much for the incredible support, in kudos, comments, twitter replies, and art, it is all so much more than I ever thought possible.

I truly hope you enjoy/have enjoyed <3

Make sure to follow my [twitter](#) for more writing news and to see what I'm working on next

And as always, check out the accompanying [playlist](#) to enhance your reading experience and maybe get some new jams!

Thank you all so much <3

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BETA'd once, let's hope it's all good

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“Pass me the cable by your foot, Dream.” Sapnap calls, motioning with his hands towards the thick coord laying in the floor of the pavilion.

Dream tosses it to him barely sparing a look, not that Sapnap expects him too when he’s focused on plugging in his own cables, checking that the right plugs are in the right places.

It’s a little hectic right now, it always is, setting up before a performance, and while this one certainly isn’t their biggest venue, it doesn’t make it any less important.

They’d been invited to perform at a local ‘Music in the Park: Spring-Fest!’, on their own pavilion stage for a day-long set of providing music to park-goers as they visit the local vendors set up around the grounds, and while it seemed daunting, Sapnap was really looking forward to it.

They had had to censor some of their songs, learn a few more covers to fill the gaps, but in the 8

months since Sunset, they've expanded their discography quite a bit, worked on some more originals, and made some pretty incredible strides.

Sapnap is *incredibly* proud of the group.

Bad is somewhere, probably placing the posters around the venue to gain more attention, and Skeppy is helping George move his drums, much to the drummer's dismay.

"Oh my god, dude, hold your side properly or else your drums are going to be non-functional at the end of this trip." The shorter shouts at George, who from Sapnap's perspective, looks like he has a far better grip than Skeppy, who is struggling to hold the weight of the instrument.

"I'm definitely not the problem here." George grunts out as he begins up the stairs on the side of the stage, gaze flat as he focuses on the grueling task of moving a full drum set up several stairs.

Sapnap is about to offer his help when Bad shows up from around the corner, gasping before getting on Skeppy's side to help him, lifting the weight easily while still managing to berate Skeppy.

"Skeppy! You're going to lose your grip if you carry it like that, you gotta lift from your legs, not your back!" Bad does an incredible show of this, relieving Skeppy from the full weight of the drums and helping George lift them with ease.

Sapnap supposes you get that kind of strength from heaving around musical equipment every day as part of your job, and returns to his own business, checking his phone every once and a while and staring at the time as the festival opening draws near.

Quackity is late, as per usual, but Sapnap's not worried he won't show before they start, even if it is in a flustered fashion. As if on cue, a figure comes running up the park's pathway, tearing towards the stage and flinging off a leather jacket, placing a guitar case beside it far more carefully.

"You'd think they'd let me park my bike in the lot right next to us, but no, apparently not." The lead guitarist gripes as he ruffles his hair, tugging it back into a messy pony-tail before replacing the beanie he still so stubbornly wears.

Sapnap can't help but grin at his boyfriend's disheveled state, and as soon as Quackity catches his breath, he's turning towards Sapnap with a wide grin and open arms, practically scooping up the bassist before kissing him fondly in greeting.

"Hey baby, how's your day been?" He says, eyes warm and glittering in the dappled sun.

Sapnap smiles back lacing his fingers together with his partner's before replying. "Pretty good, busy, but good." Quackity nods. "Better now that you're here." It's cheesy sure, but it brings a soft giggle from Quackity that makes it worth it.

"Alright Four-String, whatcha working on, where can I help?"

"Slow down, Hot Wheels, catch your breath, take a moment." He unwinds himself from Quackity's arms as he finishes connecting the speaker to mic stand in front of him. "I can't believe Bad had you working down to the wire." He says, loud enough for Bad to hear him from further downstage, grinning as he waits his friend's reply.

"Hey!" Bad cries out, stalking towards Sapnap. "Look, I didn't force the muffin-head to work extra, in fact, I said he should take the day off like I did, but he insisted." Bad says as Sapnap pulls

himself back to his feet. “And when he insists, it is *incredibly* difficult to get him to change his mind.”

Quackity is wearing the most shit-eating grin known to man, and Sapnap can’t help but laugh as Bad watches the two with a single brow raised.

“Laugh all you want, but you know I’m right. I *will* be paying you overtime no matter what you say, though.”

“Ok, ok, fine, thank you, how can I refuse, you’re just so kind.” Quackity complies, and Bad grumbles before heading off to finish setting up the drums with George.

“How’s the job treating you? Still good?” Sapnap checks as he hands Quackity a stray coord to wrap.

“Of course it is, Bad’s an incredible boss. I still can’t believe you set that up for me.” The guitarist says, hiking the wrapped coord over his shoulder as they move to the nearby amp.

“Well, it wasn’t hard to convince Bad. He was short-staffed, and I knew he’d treat you well. Coord?” Sapnap replies, and holds his hand out as Quackity passes the coord towards him to be plugged in.

“Yeah, but it still means a lot to me. I think I’ll be able to pull my weight in rent soon, I know you and Karl are really carrying me right now.” He says, and Sapnap scoffs.

“Believe me, we don’t mind.”

The 3 of them have been renting an apartment together for the past couple of months since moving from the old four-person he had shared with Dream and George.

The other two had decided to move to their own apartment, and having four bedrooms for three people who preferred to share one room anyways was simply too much money to spend.

So, they had found a reasonably priced 2 bedroom apartment located around the inner city to share. It wasn’t much different from sharing the apartment with Dream and George, Sapnap would note, except for the fact that he no longer had to worry about walking in on his roommates in precarious positions.

He’d never admit it outloud, but he did occasionally miss their presence around, even if he’d take living with his boyfriends over his bestfriends any day.

“Yeah, but I feel bad.” Back to the present, and Quackity, though still struggling financially, has been working with Karl to get the financial ruin from Schlatt back in order. The two had refused to let Quackity pay a single cent for anything apartment related until he felt entirely comfortable with his credit, and the lead found plenty of different ways to pull his weight.

“Well don’t. Karl and I do not care, guarantee.” He replies, and that’s the end of the discussion.

“Speaking of Karl, where is he?” Quackity asks, rummaging around for another coord for Sapnap.

“Parking the van since we’ve got everything off it now. He should be back soon.” Sapnap replies as they finish with the amp and move to the next mic.

As if summoned, a bright whirlwind of color appears on the crest of the hill from the parking lot, barreling his way back towards the stage with a jingle of van keys.

“Sapnap!” The rhythm-guitarist calls as he notes the lead’s presence, and no sooner have the words left his mouth than the shorter is being embraced by a flurring of neons and brunette. “How was work, you little workaholic?” He asks, still holding the lead in his arms.

Quackity smiles fondly at his boyfriend. “Good. Bad says he’s gonna pay me extra for overtime.”

“As he should! You deserve it, baby.” Karl says before planting a kiss to Quackity’s lips and letting him go.

“Van’s all parked, Sap.” He says, holding out the keys. Before Sapnap can grab them, George is whisking by and snatching them, pocketing the key-ring before continuing towards rightstage.

“Now stop flirting and get back to set-up, I can’t be the only one doing the work. We’ve already lost Dream to some weird sight-reading battle Skeppy’s got him hooked on.”

Sapnap grins after his friend and turns to his two boyfriends. “Well you heard the man, come on.”

Quackity nods, heading back to grab his guitar and start plugging it in while Karl hangs tight near Sapnap.

“Did you see our EP’s peaking on local charts? Nothing too crazy, but still pretty cool.” Karl says, showing some local radio stations ‘Top 10 Hits of the Week’ chart.

“That’s still totally epic. I can’t believe we managed to record and release that in less than 3 months. Manifold’s audio editors are insane!” He exclaims as Karl laughs.

“So true! But seeing it do so well must be incredible for you guys.” He replies, and Sapnap smiles softly.

“Yeah, it’s really cool to see literal years in the works actually, well, *work*.” And it’s true. Their EP has been doing remarkably well in local music spheres, and for the first time in Sapnap’s life, his music is actually becoming profitable.

There’s an almost workable income, and if things keep moving at the pace they are, Sapnap wonders if he’ll be able to quit his job soon.

Between the passive income, they’ve become an increasingly popular choice for local venues as well, their name spreading from Sunset and beyond once they managed a full release.

Sapnap can’t wait until the Summer when they can finally release the first full-length album they’ve had in the works since December, with several brand new originals. As it turns out, Quackity had more than just the one rough version of a song, and between his music and the copious amounts of half finished ones from George, the group had managed to flesh out just enough for a full album of originals.

“I bet. Hey, I was thinking, maybe we could make a music video for our title track?” Karl suggests as he begins tugging an aux cord to his keyboard. “I’ve got a bunch of ideas for ‘Infinitely Ordinary’, and I can plan it all, no worries, you guys wouldn’t have to do much and-”

“Karl,” Sapnap cuts off his rambling by grabbing his hands with a soft smile. “That sounds incredible, ok? We’ll talk budgeting at our next practice, alright?” He assures, and Karl nods, flushing lightly.

“Right, ok, cool.” He pauses before sending an equally bright smile back. “Thank you.”

Sapnap nods, plugging in the last of his own coords and taking his place across the stage from Karl, strumming some chords experimentally.

Dream's done with whatever competition he'd gotten roped into, and returns to the stage to check his mic.

"Hello? Testing, one, two, three- hey!" He exclaims as Quackity cuts him off with a fiery lick.

"Oops, my bad." The lead replies without a shred of remorse in his tone, a wolfish grin on his face. Dream just rolls his eyes with a fond smile before continuing the sound check.

They spend some time warming up, Skeppy adjusting volumes and balancing tone, before an attendant comes by to let them know that the event has officially started and they can begin performing whenever they're ready.

"Alright, well, are we all ready?" George asks as the attendant walks away, and the first people trickle into the park.

"I think so." Dream replies, and George goes to start the count-in before Dream stops him. "Wait! Who are we?"

Sapnap grins as Dream starts the familiar cheer for the group, the rest of the band sharing equally fond looks as they reply.

"Feral Boys!"

"Come on guys, WHO ARE WE?" Dream says, louder, and Sapnap's grin widens as he replies once more.

"FERAL BOYS!" The cheer is far more enthusiastic this time, and Dream smiles at them satisfactorily.

"There it is." He says, and motions to George to start the count-in again. "Alright boys, let's rock."

Chapter End Notes

And there you have it!

I pretty much said what I needed to in the beginning notes, but once again you guys are an absolutely amazing group of readers if you've made it this far.

Thank you so much for giving Good Pitch a chance, and I hope you truly have enjoyed <3

Please make sure to leave you kudos and comments if you enjoyed, I try to reply to as many as I can, but I read them all!

Follow me on [twitter](#) if you enjoyed this and wanna see more/wanna know what I'm up to in my daily life, you little stalker ;)

Again, and incredible thanks to the amazing art I've received from @blacle_paka on [twitter](#) and [instagram](#) with this [GORGEOUS work of the boys during practice](#)

and @wertbzjdbjsd on [twitter](#) and [instagram/@44bugs](#) on tumblr with this [beautiful collection of sketches of the fiances' designs!](#)

See you in the next adventure where we have Feral boys at Hogwarts, oooooo

-Cure

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!